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Congregation of the Mission

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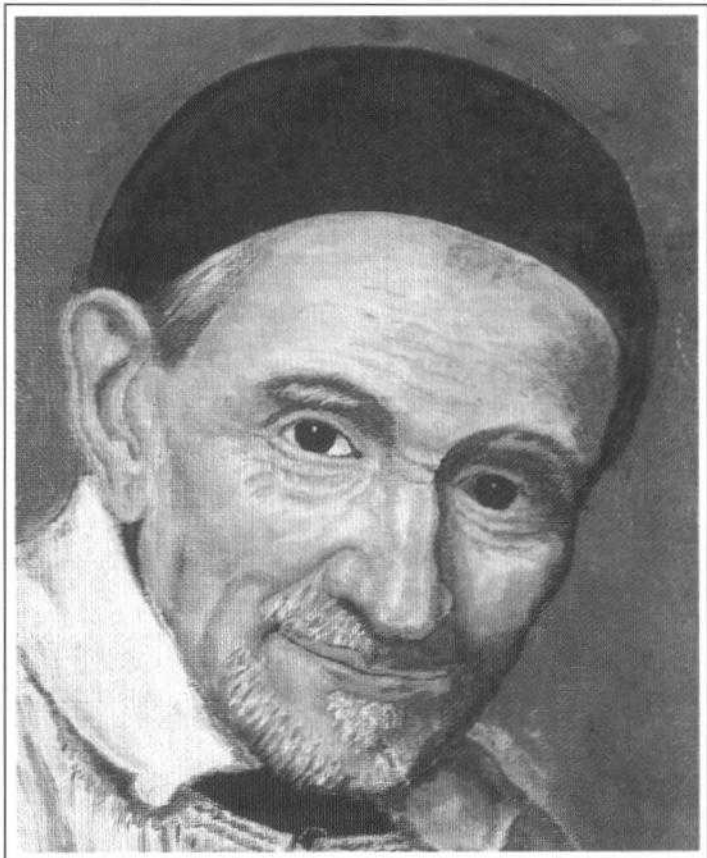
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# VINCENTIANA

43rd YEAR, N° 6

NOVEMBER-DECEMBER 1999



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## *The Great Jubilee of 2000*

CONGREGATION OF THE MISSION  
GENERAL CURIA

# VINCENTIANA

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43rd year, N° 6

November-December 1999

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# HOLY SEE

## *Appointments*

The Holy Father has elevated to the dignity of Archbishop His Excellency Monsignor José Carlos Melo, C.M., Auxiliary Bishop of San Salvador de Bahía (Brazil), keeping the titular see of Ceramo.

*(L'Osservatore Romano, June 3, 1999, p. 1)*

The Holy Father has nominated His Excellency Monsignor Berhane Yesus Demerew Souraphiel, C.M., Apostolic Administrator "sede vacante" of Addis Abeba Ethiopia, as Metropolitan Archbishop of the same Metropolitan Archeparchy.

*(L'Osservatore Romano, July 8, 1999, p. 1)*

The Holy Father has named as Bishop of Nola (Italy) His Excellency Monsignor Beniamino Depalma, C.M., until now Archbishop of Amalfi - Cava de' Tirreni, keeping the personal title of Archbishop.

*(L'Osservatore Romano, July 16, 1999, p. 1)*



# GENERAL CURIA

June 12, 1999

## *To the Visitors of the Congregation of the Mission*

My very dear Confreres,

The Peace of Our Lord Jesus Christ be always with you!

In response to the directives of the General Assembly of 1992, we established the Center for International Formation St. Vincent de Paul (CIF) in Paris. For the past 5 years at CIF, we have been running the "Vincentian Ongoing Formation Program" which has been aimed primarily at confreres between 35-50 years of age. The vast majority of the participants have given the program a very positive evaluation. This program will continue its good work.

The General Assembly of 1998 encouraged continued emphasis on formation, and particularly on the formation of our formators. The call for formation has been repeated many times in the last years by numerous provinces and confreres and by the General Council. In response to this call, with the consent of the General Council, I have decided to establish two additional programs at CIF and I am writing to introduce these programs to you and to seek your input. The titles of the programs are tentative and your input will influence the content.

1. *50+ Program (Vincentian Heritage Program)*: One program will be aimed at confreres more than 50 years of age who are seeking to grow in their appreciation of our Vincentian heritage and to renew themselves in our Vincentian charism. Many of the details of the program need to be determined in dialogue with the CIF team and possible participants, but, in brief, these characteristics will be present:

- 4 weeks in length;
- a single language for each session beginning with separate sessions in French, Spanish, and English, with the possibility of sessions in other languages, such as Italian, Portuguese, Polish, etc., depending on interest;
- 30 participants per session;

- the content will include some study of the works and life of St. Vincent, our Constitutions and Statutes, and the Vincentian Family; some visits to Vincentian sites; the sharing of experiences by the participants;
- the cost of this program would be about 1.150 Euros (\$1.250 USD) per participant.

2. *Institute for Vincentian Specialists:* A second program will be aimed at those confreres who would seek to be specialists in Vincentian studies. Every province could hope to have one or more confreres who are well-versed in Vincentian subjects. These confreres are a boon both to the Province and the whole Congregation. This Institute will have the purpose of helping serious confreres to achieve this goal in part. It would certainly not be possible for a large number of confreres to participate in such an undertaking, but there are a few who could profit from it greatly and bring its fruits back to the Province. One special group which could be served by this Institute would be formators of our own who need to have a special appreciation of our Vincentian roots. This is intended to be an intense program with the primary emphasis on guided research and self-study. Among the characteristics of this program would be:

- a duration from 3 months to one year depending on the needs and competence of the participant;
- no minimum number of participants; one confrere is sufficient since the work is individual;
- no age limit for the program;
- acceptance to the program by the CIF Directors in collaboration with the Visitor and the General Council;
- objectives for the time of research designed by the participant in dialogue with the CIF Directors;
- a reading knowledge of French;
- a contract between the participant and the CIF team defining mutual responsibilities as well as the relationship between the participant and a mentor;
- the cost of the program for one-year would be about 9.300 Euros (\$10.000 USD); some scholarship help will be available for provinces with fewer resources, but the cost is significant, as is the goal.

On the attached sheets, please respond to a few questions on these two new programs. The calendar for the CIF programs, which is included, will cover the next 5 years (2000-2004). I ask you to indicate on these forms those confreres who will participate in all the CIF programs, and I take this opportunity to remind you that all confreres between 35-50 are expected to participate in the



"Vincentian Ongoing Formation Program." Please return all these sheets by July 31, 1999 to Fr. John Rybolt, CM. even if you will not have any participants.

Fr. John Rybolt, C.M.  
Centre International de Formation  
95, rue de Sèvres  
75006 Paris - France

Thank you for your cooperation in this matter as in so many others. I am confident that both of these new programs, like the "Vincentian Ongoing Formation Program," will be significant contributions to the deepening of our appreciation and understanding of our Vincentian tradition.

Your brother in St. Vincent,

Robert P. Maloney, C.M.  
Superior General

September 7, 1999

*To the Visitors of the Congregation of the Mission  
and the Visitatrixes of the Daughters of Charity*

My very dear Brothers and Sisters,

Recently you received a copy of the new International Statutes for the Vincentian Marian Youth groups, approved by the Holy See on February 2, 1999. These groups now exist in more than 40 countries, on all the continents, and have more than 200,000 members.

Today we are happy to announce that the Permanent Secretariat for the International Association began to function in Madrid on September 1, 1999, with an international membership:

Sr. Luzdari Jiménez, D.C. (Province of Cali, Colombia)

Fr. José Eugenio López García, C.M. (Province of Salamanca, Spain)

José Juan Pérez Ramos (Spain)

Deborah Pacheco (Puerto Rico)

Gloria del Carmen Santillán Martínez (Mexico)

Ivanildo Dantas (Brazil)

The President of the International Association is Edurne Urdampilleta (from Spain), who has agreed to serve provisionally until elections can be held during the first General Assembly of the JMV, which will take place in Rome, August 8-12, 2000.

We hope that the Permanent Secretariat will be able quickly to establish a communications network with all of the national centers and begin to distribute formation materials and a regular news bulletin that will be useful to the JMV throughout the world.

It is encouraging that this new beginning is taking place precisely at the dawn of the third millennium. Our youth groups are rapidly growing. They will have a very important role to play in the spread of the Vincentian charism in the future. We hope that in time these groups will come to exist in all the countries (presently more than 135) where the Vincentian Family now serves the poor.

Right from the beginning we would like to create a fund that will provide a stable source of revenue for its future work, since the Permanent Secretariat will have many initial and ongoing expenses. If you should be interested in assisting, contributions can be made as follows:

Bank: Banco Central Hispano Americano  
Sucursal de José Abascal, 52  
28003 Madrid - Spain

Swift: CENTESMM

Name of Account: Juventud Mariana Vicenciana  
Secretariado Internacional

Pesetas (Euros) Account Number: 0049 3155 97 2614074874

US Dollar Account Number: 0049 3155 91 2114075269

When the Secretariat's web page has been created and activated, you will be able to follow its activities. As it starts out, we ask your prayer that the Lord will make it an effective instrument in drawing young people throughout the world toward a fuller immersion in the charism of the Vincentian Family.

Eduarne Urdampilleta  
International President  
Vincentian Marian Youth

Sr. Juana Elizondo, D.C.  
Superioress General

Robert P. Maloney, C.M.  
Superior General

October 15, 1999

*To the members of the Congregation of the Mission  
throughout the world*

My very dear Brothers,

May the grace of Our Lord be always with you!

Each year in October I write to you about our new international missions and about other missionary needs as well, providing some news and appealing for help. This year I am doing likewise. But since so many confreres make inquiries about China, I will first offer you a longer account of my recent visit there.

## CHINA

Victor Bieler and I flew to Taiwan on April 24 to join in the meeting of the Asian-Pacific Visitors' Conference (APVC). It was a very active, well-prepared, well-run meeting. We also had the opportunity to meet with the confreres and Daughters of Charity living in Taiwan. I thank God for the renewed energy that one senses in our mission there. Volunteers have arrived from Indonesia, Holland, the United States, Ireland, the Philippines, the Congo, Poland, and India. During his six years as Visitor, Fr. Hugh O'Donnell brought experience, vision, and unifying gifts to the province. Recently Fr. John Wang was named to take his place and Sr. Emma Lee became the Vice-Visitatrix of the Daughters of Charity. I am most grateful to the confreres and Daughters for the wonderful hospitality that they showed Victor and me during our stay there. On May 1, I departed for the mainland, accompanied by Fr. Augustin Cheng and Sr. Emma Lee.

This was my third trip to the continent. My main purpose was to visit the Vincentians and Daughters of Charity who are teaching English there. I also had the opportunity to see once again our elderly Daughters of Charity and confreres in the areas of Beijing and Tianjin, as well as the younger members of both Communities.

China is unique. A flood of impressions poured in on me as I arrived on the mainland. The population is huge. The people are very friendly. The young often begin a conversation on the street or on a bus in order to practice their English. They ask very direct questions: Where are you from? What do you do? How much money do you earn? I reply that I used to teach, that I come from New York, and that I am retired. In the tourist areas you pay prices that are equivalent to those in Western Europe and the United States. Outside

those places, however, you can still live very inexpensively in China. A good meal in a restaurant where the people themselves eat, for example, costs only \$2 or \$3. Housing and clothing are also very cheap for the native population. Their salaries, of course, are likewise very low. Several young women with whom I spoke receive a wage of from \$60 to \$110 a month.

Sr. Emma, Fr. Augustin, and I visited Wuhan, Chongqing, Beijing, and Tianjin. As I know you understand, I cannot give you all of the details of the trip. But where I omit information, I trust that you will read between the lines.

I was very impressed by the confreres and Daughters who are teaching English. They attest to be extraordinarily happy there in China. In fact, several told me that they would like to spend their whole life there! Their mission is one of simple presence. Apart from teaching, they can exercise no explicit ministry. But all recognize that their presence is both important and appreciated. I concur in their judgment. I sensed that the Chinese students and faculty members deeply appreciate their being at the universities.

Each has an apartment which, while simple, is more than adequate. In Wuhan, I stayed in the same building with Dick Preuss and Henk de Cuijper. In Chongqing, Augustin and I lived in Jan Ermers' apartment, which had a guest room, while Emma stayed with Sr. Katie Kline. Sr. Ann Laidlaw lives nearby. In Beijing I was not able to stay at the university itself, but was within close walking distance of the apartments of Joseph Loftus and Padraig Regan. Unfortunately, I was not able to see Paweł Wierzbicki since he had to leave Beijing suddenly, just before my arrival, to be with his dying father.

Seeing the impact of the presence of the confreres and the Daughters on the mainland and experiencing how happy they are, I would encourage anyone who is interested in teaching English there to volunteer. Knowledge of Chinese is not necessary. The commitment is for a minimum of one year and is renewable.

On this trip I had many more contacts with the "official" church than in the past. As you know, the Holy See encourages superiors to visit both the "official" and the underground churches, with a view toward eventual reconciliation. In the past such contacts were not always easily made. This time, however, I had the opportunity to meet with several bishops. The situation is very complicated, since at times both the "official" and the underground bishop are recognized by Rome. At other times, this is not the case.

Visitors like me cannot celebrate Mass publicly. When I participated at the Sunday Mass in Wuhan, I found the church packed with people of all ages. I was surprised by how different it was from the first time I assisted at Mass in Beijing six years ago. At that time, the priest celebrated according to the old rite with his back toward the people. He did not preach. In Wuhan now, the priest

celebrated according to the post-Vatican II rite, in Chinese. He preached at length and, in fact, in a very lively manner. The people were quite engaged by the homily.

Much to my surprise, I was also invited to speak at three seminaries. I found the sessions with the seminarians very interesting. They took part actively and asked lots of questions. They pray openly for the Pope and asked me all about him, expressing a hope that he would soon visit China.

In sharp contrast with what I have written above, I found life still difficult for many of those who live in the underground church (though they themselves attest that it is much better than in the past!). I met a number of confreres, three of whom I had not encountered on previous visits. One of these lives and works in relative tranquillity now, though earlier he had been in prison for 20 years. The other two were in prison relatively recently.

I had several very touching meetings with our elderly sisters. They were quite communicative. One, whom I had never met before, told me that during the Cultural Revolution she knelt in the village square with a sign hanging around her neck stating that she was a counter-revolutionary. She was beaten so badly that she thought she was about to die. Strangely, she narrated, she felt no fear at all at the time and simply waited for death to come. She survived.

I met another sister for the first time. She entered the Community in 1932 and is now 96 years of age. When I left her, she kissed me and told me that our next meeting would be in heaven!

On visits like this, one must rely very much on the judgment of those who live in the local place. On one occasion, I was able to spend a good part of the day with our younger and older sisters, praying with them, conversing and eating together peacefully. On another occasion, in meeting with a group of ten members of our family, we had to cut short our program because they felt that our situation was precarious.

In Tianjin, I visited our confrere Bishop Shi for the third time. He has built a new seminary since my last trip. I was delighted to spend several hours with the little community of Daughters of Charity that he has founded. Twenty-five of them live cramped together in a tiny house. They are really quite poor but they served us a very abundant meal. I thought that the platters of Chinese food would never stop coming. I was touched by their generosity and at the same time by the simplicity of their lives. I gave them a talk about our Vincentian Family. They were wonderfully attentive and were still asking questions when the time of our departure arrived.

One of our principal concerns in China is, as you might imagine, the personal support, encouragement, and formation of both the elderly and the young. The confreres and Daughters from Taiwan work at this very generously.

Several bishops asked about a rule of life for their priests. I hope that we can assist them in formulating one. I have made several recommendations to the confreres in Taiwan about this and other matters.

Forgive me for going on so long, but I know how interested you are in China, which has had such an important place in the history of the Congregation. There is much more to say, but I am sure you get the gist.

### Further news briefs on the Missions

- **Rwanda** - Juan Ávila has been there since last December. The Daughters of Charity were delighted that he was able to provide them with some Vincentian formation in preaching their annual retreat this year. Rogelio Toro arrived in August and began serving a parish in Burundi. After a stay in Paris to learn the language, Alirio de Jesús Ceballos and Orlando Yesit Fonseca have just now arrived in Rwanda and the community should grow to six in the first half of 2000 with the arrival of Julio César García and William Alonso Marín.
- **Solomon Islands** - Rafael Sucaldito has been there for several months now and Jack Harris is preparing to arrive towards the end of the year. However, Stanislaus Reksosusilo is planing on returning to Indonesia at the end of the year, after five years of generous service in the Solomons. The situation became very precarious this summer with ethnic tensions between the people of Guadalcanal and the people of Malaita. Our confreres were obliged to send the seminarians back to their homes. There were demonstrations and looting, especially in Honiara.
- **Mozambique** - The Vice-Province continues to suffer from lack of personnel because of the sickness and the aging of the confreres and the need for several of them to return home. They desperately need help. Fortunately, they will be getting some with the expected arrival of Miguel Sánchez Alba from Madrid before the end of this year, but even more is needed.
- **Bolivia** - In the spring, the confreres purchased land for the construction of a house in El Alto. Since then, they have met with an architect and a draft project for the construction of a pre-seminary and community house has been drawn up. In the meantime, the confreres are using a house belonging to the Parish of Santiago II de El Alto, where two of them also serve. The other three confreres serve in the field and all five come together regularly in the parish house. The two confreres serving in the parish also do vocation work and assist with other branches of the Vincentian Family. José Antonio Ubillús visited them recently.

- **Siberia** - Alojz Letonja arrived in the spring of this year. The Apostolic Administrator, Bishop Joseph Werth, has divided this huge area into six regions and has asked us to coordinate the region near the Urals, around Svjerdlovskaja Oblast. He also has invited the Daughters of Charity to come. Daughters from the Province of Slovakia will arrive around May 2000. Józef Kapuściak just returned from visiting there.
- **Albania** - In the fall, construction was begun on the new cathedral of Rrëshen. However, the situation became very unstable afterwards, with so many refugees arriving from Kosovo. The confreres and Daughters gave themselves in every possible way in helping with the refugees: providing lodging for some, offering health care in the camps, and channeling food and other goods to them.
- **Kharkiv, Ukraine** - A coadjutor brother from Poland joined the confreres there last year. Jacek Żyromski came at their request to help with the construction. Recently Jacek Dubicki returned to Poland after more than three years in Kharkiv. He has been replaced by a newly ordained confrere, Roman Kubina. The parish continues to grow. The confreres have started a charitable social center, offering computer and sewing classes for the poor, the unemployed, and lonely mothers. They would like another confrere to join them. Seven young men have shown an interest in the Congregation.
- **Cuba** - The confreres from the United States, Spain, and Colombia who have been assigned there in recent years are still unable to get visas. Some can go into the country for a couple of months on tourist visas, but then they must leave.
- **Tanzania** - Jacob Panthapally arrived some months ago, took the language and inculturation course and has now begun his ministry. The confreres have taken on a new mission in Songea, on a five-year trial basis.
- **Algeria** - The house in Algiers has been erected as an interprovincial house of the two French Provinces. Christian Mauvais has joined François Hiss and Firmin Mola Mbola there. Dariusz Górski is still studying culture and the Arabic language at the PISAI here in Rome preparing to go to Algeria.

### First Appeal

Our main priority here in the General Council is to strengthen the missions we have already begun. Only in that context will we attempt to respond to appeals to begin other missions. We continue to receive many calls for help in the formation of the clergy. Below let me outline some of the principal needs:



- The various new international missions described above would be happy to have further volunteers. From my previous letters you already know some of the background and the prerequisites for these missions.
- We continue to hope to open a small missionary parish near the seminary in the Solomons. We judge that this would enrich both the seminary and the parish communities. This will entail sending two more confreres to the Solomons.
- I am quite concerned about our vice-province in Mozambique, one of the poorest countries in the world. The Vice-Visitor has written repeatedly over the last several years expressing his need for help in the internal seminary and in the staffing of the center for the formation of lay leaders. He is also seeking lay volunteers who could provide instruction in basic professional skills like carpentry, welding, plumbing, and electricity.
- The Visitor of Puerto Rico has also frequently asked for help in staffing the formation programs in Haiti and the Dominican Republic, where there are numerous vocations.
- Fr. Lazare de Gérin remains alone in Iran, under difficult working conditions. The languages are French and Persian. Unfortunately, it is not easy to obtain permission to enter the country.
- The Daughters of Charity would love to have Vincentians to accompany them in their new mission in Angola. The bishop has sent a letter inviting us. The language is Portuguese.
- The Province of the Congo has requested help in the formation of its own candidates. The language is French. Several confreres have left the country recently to go to other missions.
- The Apostolic Prefect in Jimma-Bonga, our confrere Fr. Theo van Ruijven, still needs help in the administrative side of his new service to the Church there. We were unable to find a confrere for this work from among last year's candidates.
- The Visitor of Ethiopia has requested some help in formation for a few years while his own confreres are completing their studies.
- The bishops of Papua New Guinea have asked our help at the seminary in Port Moresby. Recently the Holy See wrote to me addressing this same appeal directly to the Congregation of the Mission. The Province of the Philippines has expressed some interest in this work, but at present is not able to supply the two or three priests needed. The language is English. The needs are in spiritual direction and in the teaching of theology.

Those are some of the principal needs. I would be very happy to hear from you if you should be interested in volunteering for any of these, or other, missions. I am enclosing a sheet that provides some information in regard to the process of volunteering.

### Second Appeal

In the last two years I have appealed to you for financial assistance for our many missions. As you know, we already receive monies from three main sources:

- 1) the generosity of provinces that send us surplus funds for the poor and for the formation of the clergy;
- 2) large and small gifts that the Superior General receives in the course of the year, which total up to a very significant sum;
- 3) revenues from some funds that have existed here at the General Curia for a number of years.

But our needs in the missions are continually increasing. They are especially pressing in the area of formation since precisely those provinces that have the fewest economic resources also have the largest number of vocations. In that light, almost five years ago we established the "International Mission Fund: 2000" and two years ago we began making a special appeal to the provinces and to individual confreres to contribute to this fund. The response has been wonderful. Last year's special appeal raised US \$158,198, beyond the monies arriving from the three sources described above. Several confreres and former confreres have also expressed the intention to make the IMF: 2000 one of the principal beneficiaries in their will.

Beginning next June, the interest coming from IMF: 2000 will be available for the first time for distribution. The interest from another new source, the Mary Immaculate Seminary International Seminary Fund, was already available for us to use this past June. These funds will enable us to increase significantly our help to the various missions and poorer provinces.

Meanwhile, with the generous help of several provinces, we have decided to continue to increase the capital of IMF: 2000 by seeking further contributions to a parallel capital fund which will grow alongside IMF: 2000 for five more years and then will be merged with it in the year 2004.

As you might imagine, I am immensely grateful to all the provinces and individuals that have made such generous contributions. I encourage you, if you are able, to continue. Last year I mentioned that several of our needy provinces had written to me telling me that fund-raising agencies, which assisted them in the past, have recently told them that their funds are diminishing and that they will no longer be able to help. This sad phenomenon continues. That makes it all the more imperative that we continue to create means for responding to the increasing needs of our missions.

So I ask you, with as much simplicity as I can summon up, to reflect on whether you as an individual can make a contribution,

small or large, to the IMF: 2000. I also ask each of the provincials to discuss with the members of your council whether your province might be able to make a further contribution, small or large. I am enclosing a sheet that will provide you with instructions as to how this can be done.

That is the news and those are my appeals. I can honestly say that the response to these letters over the last several years has often moved me very deeply. Many have volunteered to go to difficult missions. Others who because of their present work, or age, or background, cannot volunteer have expressed great interest and support for the missions. A very large number of confreres have sent individual donations as a sign of their solidarity. Twenty-three of the provinces, even some of the poorest, have also contributed; some of these donations have been very large. I am certain that the Lord will pour out abundant blessings on those who have given so generously.

Your brother in St. Vincent

Robert P. Maloney, C.M.  
Superior General

Advent 1999

*To the Members of the Congregation of the Mission*

My very dear Brothers,

May the grace of Our Lord be always with you!

Last year we followed Matthew's Magi as they journeyed to worship the newborn king. On the Lucan stage no Magi appear. The journeyers who arrive at the manger at Christmas are shepherds. Their story unfolds in three acts, all of which foreshadow significant future events.

In the first act (2:8-12), an angel, from whom the glory of God shines out, appears suddenly and recites what seem to be the words of a royal proclamation: "I announce to you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. For today, in the city of David, a savior has been born to you who is Messiah and Lord." This is Luke's first mention of the good news, a theme he loves. But the proclamation is filled with irony. The whole world is in movement because Caesar Augustus has decreed that a census should be taken. Yet Luke proclaims that Jesus, not Augustus, is the savior of the world and the source of peace. Even more ironic, the angel announces his message not to the powerful Augustus, not to Quirinius, the governor of Syria, but to shepherds keeping a night watch over their flock. Luke will return to this theme again and again: the poor have the good news preached to them (4:18; 7:22).

The second act (2:13-14) involves a sharp change in music, lighting, and casting. Suddenly countless angels appear singing a resounding song of praise: "Glory to God in the highest heavens, and on earth peace to those on whom God's favor rests." The irony this time is tragic. Luke's readers would surely have recognized the similarity between this refrain of the angelic choir in the infancy narratives and the praise of the fickle crowd as it welcomed Jesus to Jerusalem where he will die (19:38): "Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord. Peace in heaven and glory in the highest." From the beginning of Luke's account, the shadow of violent death falls over the Prince of Peace.

In the third act (2:15-19), the shepherds set off in haste, find Mary, Joseph, and Jesus, and begin to repeat the angelic message to all. Luke is, of course, emphasizing that the poor themselves are now proclaiming the good news. But one suspects some Lucan irony here too. People's reaction to the shepherds' startling message is amazement (2:18): "All who heard it were amazed," but were they fickle and was their joy fleeting? Luke mentions only Mary as "keeping all these things, reflecting on them in her heart" (2:19).

Finally, in a Lucan postscript (2:20), the shepherds, who were first hearers and then proclaimers, become pray-ers. They return home praising and glorifying God for all that they have heard and seen. Few themes are dearer to Luke than grateful prayer. In fact, he ends his gospel with a similar refrain: "They returned to Jerusalem with great joy and were continually in the temple praising God" (24:53).

As we celebrate this final Advent of the second millennium, let me propose to you three Vincentian reflections.

- The angel makes it very clear that the news he is proclaiming is joyful. To reinforce the point, Luke brings a whole heavenly chorus on stage to sing glory to God. As evangelizers, are we bearers of joy? Is our presence among the poor "good news"? Do we know how to *celebrate* the Lord's coming? Is it clear that we are happy, like the shepherds, to make known the message we have been "told about this child" (2:17)? Advent and Christmas are seasons of profound joy. Do we know how to share in the joy of the poor in these days and add our own to theirs?
- The choir of angels prays for peace. The century now ending has had a very bad record in that regard. It has witnessed two world wars and the invention of weapons capable of destroying the human race. The final decade of the millennium has seen renewed genocide on several continents, culminating this year with the tragedies in Kosovo and East Timor. Of course it is the poor who suffer most from war. As a Vincentian Family, we will surely be praying for peace as a new millennium dawns. May I also ask you to teach and preach peace. Reconciliation played a key role in St. Vincent's mission to the poor. This took the form not only of the sacrament of penance, but also of healing rifts among families or within villages. Knowing the price that the poor were paying for war within France, Vincent also went to the Queen, to Richelieu, and later to Mazarin to appeal for peace. I hope that we his followers will have the courage to make similar appeals as the proliferation of arms continues to rob the poor of much needed resources and puts their lives and ours in peril.
- Having played their important role, the shepherds disappear. Like the Magi, they never return in the gospels. In fact, Luke subtly tell us within the shepherds' story that only one figure bridges the gap between the infancy narratives and Jesus' public ministry, Mary his mother. It is she who "kept all these things, reflecting on them in her heart" (2:19). So that we do not miss the point (!), Luke repeats it almost verbatim later in the same chapter: "His mother kept all these things in her heart" (2:51). One of my profoundest hopes for our Vincentian Family, at the dawn of the third millennium, is that we, like Mary, be profound meditators. That is the way Luke describes the mother of Jesus not only in this shepherds' story but elsewhere too. St. Vincent

talks again and again of the importance of meditating, of listening to the word of God, of pondering the meaning of events, of discerning what God is asking of us through the cries of the poor. My sincere Advent prayer is that we, whose charism so clearly emphasizes active, effective, practical service of the poor, will also be faith-filled "meditators," men and women who are always grappling to know what God is saying in word, events, and persons.

Those are my thoughts this Advent. With you, and with the choir of angels, I sing: "Glory to God in the highest heavens," and I join you in praying for peace for his people on earth.

Your brother in St. Vincent

Robert P. Maloney, C.M.

Superior General

January 1, 2000

*To the members of the Congregation of the Mission  
throughout the world*

My very dear Confreres,

May the grace of Our Lord be always with you!

I hesitate to write about the Jubilee. So much has already been said. Pope John Paul II's *Tertio Millennio Adveniente* speaks eloquently of its meaning and suggests many practical means for celebrating it well. Almost every bishops' conference has organized a Jubilee Committee and published a document with a Jubilee plan. Many Visitors have told me that they are urging the confreres to integrate their own Jubilee activities with those of the local diocese so that, at this important time, the energies of Church groups can be channeled rather than dispersed.

But many have asked me to write. I do so today as a response to their requests. I will try not to repeat what others have already said, though I know that some repetition is inevitable. My focus in these reflections is on a Vincentian celebration of the Jubilee.

## A. JUBILEE SPIRITUALITY

As you know, St. Vincent chose a Jubilee text as the motto of the Congregation:

*The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,  
therefore  
he has anointed me.  
He has sent me to bring glad tidings to the poor,  
to proclaim liberty to captives,  
recovery of sight to the blind,  
and release to prisoners,  
to announce a year of favor from the Lord.*

(Lk 4:18-19)

Our mission, like that of Jesus, is to proclaim the Jubilee, "to announce a year of favor from the Lord." Today, let me propose, as undergirding for this mission, three aspects of a Jubilee spirituality.

## 1. *Trust in Providence*

In the perspective of the Israelites, the Jubilee grew out of the sabbatical tradition. It was the sabbatical of sabbaticals (seven times seven years plus one), when fields were to lie fallow, slaves were to be emancipated, debts were to be relieved, and alienated property returned to its original owner. Though there is little evidence that these Jubilee regulations were put into practice systematically, they were written into the Holiness Code found in Leviticus because they concretized key elements in Israel's relationship with God: her confidence that God would provide abundantly for the chosen people even while they rested, her gratitude for God's faithful love, her recognition that we are stewards of the gifts of creation rather than its owners, and her respect for the personal rights and human dignity of God's chosen ones. The eloquent words of Leviticus 25:18-21 aim at arousing deep confidence in God's providence: "Observe my precepts and be careful to keep my regulations, for then you will dwell securely in the land. The land will yield its fruit and you will have food in abundance, so that you may live there without worry. Therefore, do not say: 'What shall we eat in the seventh year, if we do not then sow or reap our crop?' I will bestow such blessings on you in the sixth year, so that there will then be crop enough for three years."

Of course, few themes were dearer to St. Vincent. He saw God's providence at work everywhere. At times his words were rousing: "We cannot better assure our eternal happiness than by living and dying in the service of the poor, in the arms of providence, and with genuine renouncement of ourselves in order to follow Jesus Christ" (SV III, 392). For Vincent, trust in providence is the key to finding meaning when confronted with the sometimes tragic polarities of human experience: abundance and poverty, health and sickness, life and death, grace and sin, peace and violence, love and hatred, design and chaos, plan and disruption. The missionary, St. Vincent believed, proclaims hope, good news, even in the darkness. Men and women whose lives witness to meaning and who can speak meaning are ministers of providence. Docility to providence, a fundamental virtue for the missionary to the poor, means reverent trust before the mystery of God, as revealed in Christ, in whom life, death, and resurrection are integrated.

## 2. *Reconciliation*

When I was in Taiwan recently, I noticed that its bishops had chosen reconciliation as the focus for the year 2000. They noted that in today's world, despite high technology and an increasingly global economy, huge numbers of people experience alienation rather than peace and happiness. Many endure tension, over-stimulation, suffering, and violence. All sorts of contradictions invade their lives.



Some find themselves alienated from self, from others, from creation, and from God. The bishops' document recalled that life's journey involves moving

- \* from self-depreciation to self-appreciation,
- \* from indifference to caring for one another,
- \* from destruction of nature to respect for it,
- \* from enclosure within oneself to trust in a transcendent Being.

These four inner movements lead to four imperatives:

- \* love yourself,
- \* cherish others,
- \* value creation,
- \* adore God.

The Jubilee Year challenges us to experience God's reconciling love and to proclaim it to others. Do we love ourselves with the kind of caring, forgiving love with which God loves us? Do we cherish others: our brothers in community, the poor whom we serve, our companions in the apostolate? Do we value creation: the air we breathe, the water that purifies our bodies and quenches our thirst, the forests that play such a balancing role in the planet's equilibrium? Do we reverence God whose divine presence breaks in on us in the beauty of creation, in the love of others, and in the person of Jesus who is the source of our life?

Of course, reconciliation was at the heart of the missions that Vincent himself preached and the mission that he gave to the Company. The remission of sin, the sacrament of reconciliation, the general confession, the settling of family quarrels were all key elements in the first popular missions conducted by Vincent and his companions. Vincent encouraged the missionaries themselves to have "exuberant confidence in the sovereign Creator" (SV III, 279), so that they would communicate God's healing love to others.

We all bear scars and past sins into the new millennium. We need healing. Is there a genuine "soul friend," a confessor or spiritual director to whom we can uncover our wounds and with whom we can speak openly and often about our need for healing? Do we sense within ourselves, as the third millennium dawns, that we are growing toward greater personal wholeness, integrity and reconciliation with ourselves, with others, with creation, with God? As confessors and spiritual directors can we ourselves be a healing presence for others in this time of reconciliation?

### 3. *Gratitude*

If the Sabbath was a special day for Israel to give thanks to God, then the Jubilee, the sabbatical of sabbaticals, should be a great thanksgiving time. At the heart of the spirituality of the poor of Israel is a recognition that everything is gift. Only those who are humble are capable of proclaiming that "God who is mighty has done great things for me" (Lk 1:49). The songs of Israel's poor are full of gratitude: "Give thanks to the Lord for he is good, for his loving kindness endures forever. Give thanks to the God of gods, for his loving kindness endures forever" (Ps 136:1-2).

Henri Nouwen, who entitled a book that recounted his experience among the poor *Gracias*, wrote a reflection that struck me forcefully:

*Many poor people live in such close relationship with the many rhythms of nature that all the goods that come to them are experienced as free gifts of God. Children and friends, bread and wine, music and pictures, trees and flowers, water and life, a house, a room with just one bed, all are gifts to be grateful for and celebrated. This basic sense I have come to know. I am always surrounded by words of thanks: "Thanks for your visit, your blessing, your sermon, your prayer, your gifts, your presence among us." Even the smallest and most necessary goods are a reason for gratitude. This all-pervading gratitude is the basis for celebration. The poor not only are grateful for life, they also celebrate life constantly.*

After healing the ten lepers, Jesus expresses pain that only one returns to express gratitude (Lk 17:11-19). Similarly, St. Vincent warns the Company that ingratitude is the "crime of crimes" (SV III, 37). He encourages us, as proclaimers of the Jubilee, to recognize that everything is God's gift (SV I, 182). Do we know how to express words of gratitude to others? to those who love us? to our friends? to the Congregation? to the poor? Do we celebrate the Eucharist joyfully as persons whose fundamental life-stance is one of gratitude?

## B. PUTTING THE JUBILEE INTO PRACTICE

St. Vincent has left us three conferences about jubilee years (SV IX, 45 f.; IX, 609 f.; X, 229 f.) and in his letters urges others to participate in them (SV III, 317; V, 574). Today I encourage all the members of the Congregation to practice the Jubilee in a distinctively Vincentian way. I suggest to you three means, hoping that local communities will reflect on ways of concretizing these means even further.

## 1. *Pilgrimage to the Poor*

Some sources estimate that 30 to 40 million people will come to Rome in the year 2000. Millions will undoubtedly also flock to Jerusalem. But, from a global perspective, those who make such long journeys will be relatively few in number and most of them will have significant economic resources. I suggest today that for us Vincentians the most appropriate pilgrimage is to the poor. In them, most of all, will we find God. This pilgrimage is surely not a long one; the poor are never very far away. I am certain, actually, that most confreres have often made this trip. But I ask that each of us, as the third millennium dawns, would go to the poor in a new way.

First, go to listen. What do the poor have to say to us now, 2000 years after the coming of Jesus "to preach good news" to them? It is essential that we listen before we speak, that we understand their real situation before we plan. Are there ways in which we can gather together the poor of our neighborhoods, our parishes, our schools to understand their deepest yearnings, to know how we can better serve them? The poor will speak to us eloquently if we allow them. They will teach us too, about their willingness to share the little that they have, about their gratitude to God for the simple gifts he gives them, about their hoping against hope that God will provide.

Secondly, I encourage you to make this pilgrimage to the poor at the beginning of the third millennium with others. Bring the young especially. The experience can change their lives. As Pope John Paul II has frequently pointed out, the young hold the future in their hands. It belongs to them. Sixty-four percent of the world's population is under 25. It is crucial to involve them in our mission.

Today our own youth groups are growing very rapidly. While in Taiwan last April I discovered that they have sprung up spontaneously there, almost without our taking any initiative. The young want to do something with their lives. Do not hesitate to call forth their generosity by placing before them the needs of suffering humanity.

## 2. *Prayer*

St. Vincent was an incredibly active man, but his contemporaries also regarded him as a contemplative. Our Constitutions (42) call us, like him, to be contemplatives in action and apostles in prayer.

In a healthy Vincentian spirituality, prayer and action go hand in hand. Divorced from action, prayer can turn escapist; it can lose itself in fantasy. Divorced from prayer, service can become shallow; it can have a driven, addictive quality to it.

Recently I listened to a conference in which the priest asked: "What is the mental image that others have of our Community? What is the 'photo' that they walk away with after they have visited us?"

This priest, who was serving the lay Community of Sant'Egidio, which performs remarkable works among the poor in Rome, responded: "I think the mental photo that most people have of us is our Community at prayer." I suspect that he is right. It is surely the mental image that I have of his Community, even though it is well-known for its service to the poor and for its mediation of peace in several countries.

What is the "photo" that young people who visit us have of the Congregation of the Mission? Do they return to their homes struck by how fervently and faithfully we pray? Do they sense that the two lungs by which the Congregation breathes are prayer and the poor?

*Let me offer two suggestions in this regard.*

First, in our own spiritual tradition mental prayer plays an extremely important role. Few things received more emphasis in St. Vincent's conferences and writings. Speaking about mental prayer to the missionaries, he states: "Give me a man of prayer and he will be capable of everything. He may say with the apostle: 'I can do all things in him who strengthens me.' The Congregation will last as long as it faithfully carries out the practice of prayer, which is like an impregnable rampart shielding the missionaries from all manner of attack" (SV XI, 83).

It is my conviction that this is as true in our day as it was in St. Vincent's: faithful daily, meditative prayer is essential to the ongoing renewal of the Congregation. Our Constitutions (47, # 1), in presenting a contemporary formulation of one of Vincent's fundamental insights, call us to spend one hour daily in personal prayer. Surely meditation should occupy a substantial portion of that time. Few things are more important to our vitality in the third millennium. Contemplating the Lord silently in the presence of one another is the genius of Vincent's formula for prayer.

Secondly, in recent years, as you know, I have frequently called the Congregation to make its communal prayer "something beautiful for God and attractive to the young." This embraces especially our daily celebration of Lauds and Vespers, as well as the Eucharist. Besides making our daily prayer beautiful, we can also at times give such celebrations a particularly Vincentian tone.

Recently I consulted the Visitors about the results of our efforts over the last several years to renew our common prayer. Several attested that the outcome has been positive, but many stated that the results were meager. Still, I refuse to be discouraged in urging the Congregation to move forward in this regard. I am convinced that this is crucial for our future. I repeat this call now at the beginning of the third millennium. I realize that few, if any, disagree with me about this in principle. In such matters, lethargy is often the controlling factor, even when much good will is present.

Our prayer will not be beautiful — in fact, it will become quite routine and unattractive — unless there is some form of preparation.

I am enclosing a brief schema to help in the preparation of Lauds and Vespers. I ask that it be applied in all our houses, conscious that some are already doing this much and even more.

### 3. *Preaching and Teaching Justice*

The prophet Micah states (6:8): "What does the Lord require of you? Act justly, love steadfastly, and walk humbly with your God."

Recently I published in *Vincentiana* an article entitled "Ten Foundational Principles in the Social Teaching of the Church." Actually, I borrowed much of it from a much wiser man, with his permission! I wrote this article because I am convinced that, as Pope John Paul II wrote in *Centesimus Annus* (5): "To teach and spread her social doctrine pertains to the Church's evangelizing mission and is an essential part of the Christian message." He adds: "The 'new evangelization'... must include among its elements a proclamation of the Church's social doctrine."

We, like the prophets, are called to preach and teach justice. I know that one cannot do this every day, nor even every Sunday. The scriptures contain many other themes, like the joyful good news of the presence of the Risen Lord. But do we even occasionally preach and teach justice? I have asked this question recently in various groups and have found that few respond affirmatively.

Though the Church has been proclaiming her social doctrine eloquently for more than a hundred years, few Catholics know it well. Somehow we have failed them. We have not packaged it in a presentable form, nor made it palatable for their consumption. It is imperative that we ourselves study this teaching and know how to present it clearly. Let me encourage you, as the third millennium dawns, to preach and teach about two issues. I use them merely as illustrations. There are surely many more, but I choose these because Pope John Paul II and numerous episcopal conferences have turned their attention to them over and over again.

1. *The Reduction or Remission of International Debt*
2. *The Abolition of Capital Punishment*

It is important not to regard these issues, and other justice issues, as merely political ones, though they surely have political dimensions. The burden of debt leaves countless poor people in underdeveloped countries in a cycle of poverty from which they cannot extricate themselves. Because remission of debt is precisely a Jubilee theme, Pope John Paul II addresses the issue explicitly in *Tertio Millennio Adveniente*, as did our recent General Assembly (III, 2, d). Similarly, capital punishment is a theme directly related to the Jubilee call for mercy and to the Church's call to promote life.

In addressing these issues, it is essential to present: 1) the facts; 2) an analysis of the facts; 3) the Christian tradition (from its biblical roots to the statements of contemporary popes, bishops, and theologians); 4) practical conclusions (what can people do?). I am enclosing a small brochure on each of these two Jubilee issues. It offers a brief outline of what one might preach or teach. Enormous amounts of supplementary information are available through numerous bishops' conferences and on Internet.

I suspect that it is much more difficult to preach justice than to teach it. In the classroom one has more time to investigate the issues by presenting the facts, examining them carefully, raising objections, responding to questions, and offering as well as eliciting concrete suggestions. But on those occasions when the scriptures warrant it, a well-crafted homily on a justice theme can have remarkable results. I am enclosing two sample homilies written by Walter Burghardt, who has dedicated the latter years of his rich life to preaching justice. I hope that many of us can be as eloquent as he.

These Jubilee thoughts are longer than I had intended. I have chosen themes that are specifically Vincentian and that I judge to be extremely important for our growth and renewal at the start of the third millennium. The dawn of a millennium unveils a new horizon. Today, with you, I ask the Lord to give us eyes that are capable of searching that horizon, that can see beyond it with far-reaching vision — a vision that loves fullness of life and that knows how to promote it, a vision that creates unity and peace among disparate men and women, a vision that breaks down the barriers of division, a vision that helps eradicate the crippling causes of poverty. Of course, we can do none of these things alone. The Lord calls us to do them together in community and with the poor whom we serve. My hope is that our Vincentian Family will be a supple instrument in the Lord's hands, in the decades ahead, to help create a new future where justice and peace reign.

Your brother in St. Vincent,

Robert P. Maloney, C.M.

Superior General

## Appointments and Confirmations by the Superior General

DATE	NAME	OFFICE	PROVINCE
09/07/99	Giancarlo Passerini	Visitor	Rome
12/07/99	Augustín Slaninka	Visitor (3 <sup>o</sup> mandate)	Slovakia
22/07/99	Simão Valenga	Visitor	Curitiba
09/08/99	Héctor Horacio Espósito	Visitor	Argentina
14/09/99	Stanislaw Deszcz	Director D.C.	Congo
06/10/99	Eli Chaves dos Santos	Visitor (2 <sup>o</sup> mandate)	Rio de Janeiro
04/11/99	Jaime Corera	International Chaplain SSVdP	
08/11/99	Noel Mojica	Director D.C. (2 <sup>o</sup> mandate)	Cuba
11/11/99	José María López Maside	Visitor (2 <sup>o</sup> mandate)	Salamanca
16/11/99	John Freund	WEB Master	
17/11/99	Enrique Martínez	Director D.C.	Paraguay
07/12/99	Joseph V. Haley	Director D.C. (2 <sup>o</sup> mandate)	Los Altos Hills
16/12/99	Antonius Sad Budianto	Visitor	Indonesia
17/12/99	Viktor Kunay	Director D.C.	Romania
23/12/99	Franz Kangler	Visitor (2 <sup>o</sup> mandate)	Austria





# FEATURE:

## *The Great Jubilee of 2000*

### Morning and Evening Prayer in the Vincentian Community

In dialogue with the Father, in communion with Christ,  
and in the love of the Holy Spirit

#### I. VARIOUS ROLES

Each role should be carried out by different persons so that the celebration fits together as a harmonious collaborative effort of the community. Therefore, the accumulation of ministries by a single person should be avoided. All should be disposed to collaborate actively so as to contribute to the community's prayer.

1. Presider: begins the opening verse, tells what method to use in praying the Psalms, begins the antiphons, introduces the petitions, begins the Lord's Prayer, says the concluding prayer and (if a priest) gives the final blessing and dismisses the assembly.
2. Psalmist (or Soloist): proclaims all or part of a psalm or a canticle.
3. Reader: proclaims the "short reading," begins the responsory, and reads the petitions.
4. Intoner of the psalms: begins the individual psalms by reciting or singing the first verse.

#### II. PSALMODY

The manner of praying the psalms can be varied according to the literary genre of the psalms themselves (*General Instruction on the Liturgy of the Hours*, 121-123 and 279). A very helpful indication comes from the title given to each psalm, and especially from the

brief introduction (*didascalia*), in italic type, taken generally from the Church Fathers.

The theme thus highlighted can help the presider choose one of the modes of praying the psalms listed below. It is also good to take into account the length of the psalm, the makeup of the particular assembly, whether it is a feast day or not, etc.

Examples:

- a) verses recited by 2 alternating choirs: psalms pertaining to the People of God as a whole;
- b) psalm proclaimed in its entirety by a psalmist (or soloist): messianic and Christological psalms, or those expressive of the particular situation of the author of the psalm;
- c) psalm in which verses are alternated between a psalmist and the assembly: psalms that pertain to any of the situations described above in a) and b);
- d) psalm proclaimed by a psalmist with the antiphon repeated by the assembly after each verse or every two verses: psalms that pertain to the situations indicated in a) and b);
- e) psalm proclaimed by the whole assembly together: very brief psalms that pertain to the People of God as a whole.

### **III. STYLE OF PROCLAMATION**

Whether reciting or singing the psalms, one should maintain:

- a rigorous respect for the pauses indicated by the asterisk (\*) and the flexa (†);
- a rhythmic togetherness in praying the psalms in common, without jumping ahead or lagging behind.

### **IV. THE USE OF SONG**

Since our morning and evening prayer are liturgical acts, the use of song is indicated for the Liturgy of the Hours. Singing engages us in a fuller way as a worshipping community (cf. *General Instruction on the Liturgy of the Hours*, 270) as we praise and thank God. It is especially appropriate for solemnities and feasts, but is also helpful (with sobriety) in ordinary circumstances.

In Morning Prayer and Evening Prayer, almost any part can be sung: the opening verse, the hymn, the psalms and canticles (including the Benedictus and the Magnificat), and the Lord's Prayer. In practice, it is helpful to underline one or the other element, making the choice according to the circumstances and the capability of the assembly. If possible, the hymn should always be sung.

In singing one should be attentive to the asterisk and the flexa, as mentioned above, and one should pay particular attention to rhythm, to pitch, and to timing, according to the nature of the text and the melody.

Heaviness and slowness are to be avoided at all costs when singing in common, because they make the singing deadly and unappealing.

## V. SILENCE

The insertion of a brief meditative pause after each psalm and of a slightly longer pause after the short reading allows us to pray silently. Before the Lord's Prayer, a pause is made to provide space for spontaneous intercessions.

### *Suggested ways of praying the psalms in common*

#### FIRST WEEK

##### SUNDAY

###### EVENING PRAYER I

Ps 141,1-9

Soloist

Ps 142

Soloist; the assembly repeats the antiphon after each verse

Cant - Phil 2,6-11

Sung, or between soloist and the assembly

###### MORNING PRAYER

Ps 63

2 soloists

Cant - Dn 3

Soloist and the assembly as a litany

Ps 149

Sung

###### EVENING PRAYER II

Ps 110,1-5, 7

2 soloists (2<sup>nd</sup>, the words of God)

Ps 114

2 choirs

Cant - Rv 19,1-7

Sung

##### MONDAY

###### MORNING PRAYER

Ps 5,2-10, 12-13

2 soloists

Cant - 1 Chr 29,10-13

Sung

Ps 29

2 soloists

## EVENING PRAYER

Ps 11

Soloist to the end of quotation;  
the assembly the rest

Ps 15

Soloist 1<sup>st</sup> verse; 2<sup>nd</sup> soloist to the  
end

Cant - Eph 1,3-10

Sung

**TUESDAY**

## MORNING PRAYER

Ps 24

Soloist the questions; the  
assembly the rest

Cant - Tb 13,1-8

2 choirs

Ps 33

Sung

## EVENING PRAYER

Ps 20

2 choirs

Ps 21,2-8, 14

Between soloist and the assembly

Cant - Rv 4,11; 5, 9, 10, 12

2 soloists

**WEDNESDAY**

## MORNING PRAYER

Ps 36

Soloist 1-3; 2<sup>nd</sup> soloist the rest

Cant - Jdt 16,2-3; 13-15

Sung, or 2 choirs

Ps 47

Sung, or 2 choirs

## EVENING PRAYER

Ps 27,1-6

2 soloists

Ps 27 7-14

2 soloists

Cant - Col 1,12-20

Sung

**THURSDAY**

## MORNING PRAYER

Ps 57

2 soloists

Cant - Jer 31,10-14

2 soloists (one who speaks the  
"I" parts)

Ps 48

2 choirs

## EVENING PRAYER

Ps 30

2 soloists

Ps 32

Soloist; the assembly repeats the  
antiphon after each verse

Cant - Rv 11,17-18; 12,10b-12a

Sung, or 2 choirs

**FRIDAY**

## MORNING PRAYER

Ps 51	Between soloist and the assembly
Cant - Is 45,15-26	2 soloists
Ps 100	Sung

## EVENING PRAYER

Ps 41	1 <sup>st</sup> soloist v 1-3; 2 <sup>nd</sup> soloist the rest
Ps 46	Between soloist and the assembly
Cant - Rv 15,3-4	Sung

**SATURDAY**

## MORNING PRAYER

Ps 119,145-152	2 soloists
Cant - Ex 15,1-4a, 8-13, 17-18	Sung
Ps 117	Sung

**SECOND WEEK****SUNDAY**

## EVENING PRAYER I

Ps 119,105-112	2 soloists
Ps 16	Soloist
Cant - Phil 2,6-11	Sung, or between soloist and the assembly

## MORNING PRAYER

Ps 118	Between soloist and the assembly
Cant - Dn 3,32-57	Sung, or between soloist and the assembly as a litany
Ps 150	Sung

## EVENING PRAYER II

Ps 110,1-5, 7	2 soloists (2 <sup>nd</sup> , the words of God)
Ps 115	2 choirs
Cant - Rv 19,1-7	Sung

**MONDAY**

## MORNING PRAYER

Ps 42	2 soloists
Cant - Sir 36,1-5, 10-13	2 choirs
Ps 19A	Sung

## EVENING PRAYER

Ps 45,2-10	1 <sup>st</sup> soloist
Ps 45,11-18	2 <sup>nd</sup> soloist
Cant - Eph 1,3-10	Sung, or between soloist and the assembly

**TUESDAY**

## MORNING PRAYER

Ps 43	2 soloists
Cant - Is 38,10-14, 17-20	Soloist
Ps 65	2 choirs

## EVENING PRAYER

Ps 49,1-13	2 soloists
Ps 49,14-21	2 choirs
Cant - Rv 4,11; 5,9-10, 12	2 soloists

**WEDNESDAY**

## MORNING PRAYER

Ps 77	2 soloists
Cant - 1 Sm 2,1-10	Sung, or between soloist and the assembly
Ps 97	2 choirs

## EVENING PRAYER

Ps 62	2 soloists
Ps 67	Soloist; the assembly sings or recites verses 2 and 4
Cant - Col 1,12-20	Sung, or between soloist and the assembly

**THURSDAY**

## MORNING PRAYER

Ps 80	Soloist; the assembly recites verses beginning "God of hosts"
Cant - Is 12,1-6	2 choirs
Ps 81	Sung, or between soloist and the assembly

## EVENING PRAYER

Ps 72,1-11	Between soloist and the assembly
Ps 72,12-19	Between soloist and the assembly
Cant - Rv 11,17-18; 12,10b-12a	Sung, or 2 choirs

**FRIDAY**

## MORNING PRAYER

Ps 51	2 soloists
Cant - Hb 3,2-4, 13a, 15-19	2 choirs
Ps 147	Sung

## EVENING PRAYER

Ps 116,1-9	Between soloist and the assembly
Ps 121	2 choirs
Cant - Rv 15,3-4	Sung

**SATURDAY**

## MORNING PRAYER

Ps 92	Sung
Cant - Dt 32,1-12	2 soloists
Ps 8	Sung

**THIRD WEEK****SUNDAY**

## EVENING PRAYER I

Ps 113	2 choirs
Ps 116	Soloist
Cant Phil 2,6-11	Sung, or between soloist and the assembly

## MORNING PRAYER

Ps 93	2 choirs
Cant - Dn 3,57-88, 56	Between soloist and the assembly as a litany
Ps 148	Sung

## EVENING PRAYER II

Ps 110,1-5, 7	2 soloists (2 <sup>nd</sup> , the words of God)
Ps 111	2 choirs
Cant - Rv 19,1-7	Sung

**MONDAY****MORNING PRAYER**

Ps 84	Sung, or 2 choirs
Cant - Is 2,2-5	2 soloists
Ps 96	Sung

**EVENING PRAYER**

Ps 123	Soloist
Ps 124	2 choirs
Cant - Eph 1,3-10	Sung

**TUESDAY****MORNING PRAYER**

Ps 85	2 choirs
Cant - Is 26,1-4, 7-9, 12	2 choirs
Ps 67	Soloist, the assembly sings or recites verses 2 and 4

**EVENING PRAYER**

Ps 125	2 choirs
Ps 131	Soloist
Cant - Rv 4,11; 5,9-10, 12	2 soloists

**WEDNESDAY****MORNING PRAYER**

Ps 86	Between soloist and the assembly
Cant - Is 33,13-16	2 soloists
Ps 98	Sung, or between soloist and the assembly

**EVENING PRAYER**

Ps 126	2 choirs
Ps 127	2 soloists
Cant - Col 1,12-20	Sung, or between soloist and the assembly

**THURSDAY****MORNING PRAYER**

Ps 87	2 soloists
Cant - Is 40,10-17	Between soloist and the assembly
Ps 99	Between soloist and the assembly



## EVENING PRAYER

Ps 132,1-10	2 Soloists (2 <sup>nd</sup> , the text in quotation marks)
Ps 132,11-18	2 Soloists (2 <sup>nd</sup> , the text in quotation marks)
Cant - Rv 11,17-18; 12,10b-12a	Sung, or 2 choirs

**FRIDAY**

## MORNING PRAYER

Ps 51	2 soloists
Cant - Jer 14,17-21	Between soloist and the assembly
Ps 100	Sung, or 2 choirs

## EVENING PRAYER

Ps 135,1-12	2 choirs
Ps 135,13-21	2 choirs
Cant - Rv 15,3-4	Sung

**SATURDAY**

## MORNING PRAYER

Ps 119,145-152	2 soloists
Cant - Wis 9,1-6, 9-11	2 choirs
Ps 117	Sung

**FOURTH WEEK****SUNDAY**

## EVENING PRAYER I

Ps 122	Sung
Ps 130	2 soloists
Cant Phil 2,6-11	Sung, or between soloist and the assembly

## MORNING PRAYER

Ps 118	Between soloist and the assembly
Cant - Dn 3,52-57	Between soloist and the assembly as a litany
Ps 150	Sung

## EVENING PRAYER II

Ps 110,1-5, 7

2 soloists (2<sup>nd</sup>, the words of God)

Ps 112

2 choirs

Cant - Rv 19,1-7

Sung

**MONDAY**

## MORNING PRAYER

Ps 90

2 choirs

Cant - Is 42,10-16

Soloist

Ps 135,1-12

Sung, or 2 choirs

## EVENING PRAYER

Ps 136,1-9

Between soloist and the assembly  
as a litany

Ps 136,10-26

Between soloist and the assembly  
as a litany

Cant - Eph 1,3-10

Sung

**TUESDAY**

## MORNING PRAYER

Ps 101

2 soloists

Cant - Dn 3,26-27.29.34-4

2 choirs

Ps 144,1-10

Soloist

## EVENING PRAYER

Ps 137,1-6

Soloist

Ps 138

Between soloist and the assembly

Cant - Rv 4,11; 5,9-10, 12

Sung

**WEDNESDAY**

## MORNING PRAYER

Ps 108

2 soloists (2<sup>nd</sup>, what is in  
quotation marks)

Cant - Is 61,10-62, 5

Between soloist and the assembly

Ps 146

2 choirs

## EVENING PRAYER

Ps 139,1-12

Between soloist and the assembly

Ps 139,13-18, 23-24

Between soloist and the assembly

Cant - Col 1,12-20

Sung, or between soloist and the assembly

**THURSDAY**

## MORNING PRAYER

Ps 143,1-11

2 soloists

Cant - Is 66,10-14a

Soloist

Ps 147,1-11

Sung

## EVENING PRAYER

Ps 144,1-8

2 choirs

Ps 144,9-15

2 choirs

Cant - Rv 11,17-18; 12,10b-12a

Sung, or 2 choirs

**FRIDAY**

## MORNING PRAYER

Ps 51

2 soloists

Cant - Tb 13,8-11, 13-15

2 choirs

Ps 147

Sung

## EVENING PRAYER

Ps 145,1-13

2 soloists

Ps 145,14-21

2 soloists

Cant - Rv 15,3-4

Sung

**SATURDAY**

## MORNING PRAYER

Ps 92

Sung

Cant - Ez 36,24-28

Soloist

Ps 8

Sung

## The International Debt

Pope John Paul II has given special attention to the question of international debt in *Tertio Millennio Adveniente* and in the Bull *Incarnationis Mysterium*. The Holy Father states that "the Jubilee should be an auspicious moment to reestablish social justice and the rights of the poorest."

Often, what oppresses poor countries most is their international debt, which weighs heavily on the population and makes improvement in the standard of living impossible.

In fact, to make payments on debts contracted with richer countries and with multinational creditors such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the poorest countries make use of monies necessary for the social and economic development of their people.

In December 1998, the *Social Commission of the Episcopal Conference* in France published a document on the external debt of poor countries, accompanied by a petition directed to creditor nations asking for the remission of the debt from then until 2000. Many other episcopal conferences have taken up the same theme.

### The Facts

Analyzing the table shown here, taken from data gathered by the World Bank, we get a more exact picture of how international debt cuts into the economy of the poorest countries. The percentages refer to the external debt in relation to the Gross Domestic Product. Such percentages are sometimes higher than the income produced in a year, making it impossible for the countries in question to meet payments on their debt. As a consequence, development in these countries grinds to a halt, because they must direct all their resources to resolving the problem of international debt (cf. *Tertio Millennio Adveniente*).

The debt is not the ultimate problem: rather, the resultant poverty of the masses is. The debt drowns peoples in their own poverty, paralyzing all the effort to rise above it.

Almost half of humanity has to live on less than \$1.60 a day. The richest 20% have 83% of the world's wealth, while the poorest 20% have 1.4% of the world's wealth. In that context, the Program for Development of the United Nations (PDUN) estimates that governments below the Sahara transfer to creditors from the North

AFRICA			
Angola	307,2%	Kenya	76,9%
Burundi	100,4%	Madagascar	104,7%
Cameroon	112,8%	Mozambique	378,6%
Congo (Kinshasa)	212,0%	Nigeria	79,5%
Congo (Brazzaville)	279,1%	Rwanda	78,5%
Ethiopia	169,4%	São Tomé and Príncipe	637,8%
Guinea	85,6%	Senegal	72,9%
Guinea-Bissau	351,8%	Tanzania	129,7%
Ivory Coast	201,3%	Zambia	215,9%

LATIN AMERICA			
Bolivia	80,9%	Honduras	111,1%
Guyana	245,9%	Nicaragua	354,6%

SOUTHEAST ASIA			
Laos	121,9%	Vietnam	114,7%

four times what they spend for the health of their residents (*Informe para el Desarrollo Humano*, 1997).

In Cameroon, the external debt has grown from \$4.3 billion in 1987 to \$9.3 billion in 1995; that is, in eight years the debt has more than doubled. Half of what the government of Cameroon earns is used to pay the external debt, more than double what is budgeted for education and health combined!

## Analysis of the Facts

Increasing indebtedness strangles the economies of the countries affected, blocking their growth and wreaking grave social consequences in regard to prices, employment, and health. On a worldwide level, the accumulation of debt oscillates between \$100 billion and \$200 billion, and, in the opinion of international financial organizations, is for the most part unpayable, given the financial condition of the debtors, and given that the money lent to these countries has not been directed toward activities producing revenues sufficient to pay off the debt.

Government officials in countries that receive the money bear great responsibility for the problem. Money has often been diverted into personal accounts, used for buying weapons, or allotted to projects that were ill-conceived and would earn little.

However, the responsibility of lenders in richer countries is also great. In 1970, with the great rise in the price of petroleum, the large international banks, seeing considerable sums of money flowing into their coffers, agreed to lend money to poor countries without worrying about the solvency of the debtors. Moreover, government officials, in order to be able to export goods and to safeguard jobs, agreed. In addition, they assented to lending money to finance basic infrastructures (roads, hospitals, schools, etc.), even though these structures should have been financed by grants because they would generate no income.

When a country can no longer make good on its payments, the international community, represented by the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank, and the club of creditor countries (Club de Paris), permits a delay in the payment schedule. As a condition, the country must accept a *severe austerity plan*, whose purpose is to lower inflation, reduce public spending, and liberalize commercial exchange. The politics of this approach includes devaluation of the national currency, an increase in the rate of interest, an increase in taxes to augment government income and balance the budget, the suppression of restrictions on business and on the flow of capital so as to stimulate local and foreign investment. Agricultural and industrial production change direction; the focus shifts from food products and basic goods for domestic use to merchandise for export. Since the poor country must use a large part of the profits from its exports to pay back the debt, it can no longer buy needed goods from foreign countries, neither medicines nor parts necessary to repair machines. It ends up working to pay solely the interest on a capital sum impossible to pay back.

As Oxfam International affirms in its bulletin of April, 1997, *Poor Country Debt Relief*, "Payments on the debt have meant hospitals without medicines, schools without basic teams for teaching, and the collapse of services for agricultural expansion for many millions of families in rural areas. The consequence is that these people are unable to maintain normal levels of health and nutrition." The percentages of malnutrition and infant mortality are growing in many countries, and an entire generation of children is losing the possibility of getting an education. The obligation to keep making payments on the debt also means that help which comes from other countries is often used in turn to refinance payments on the debt, rather than to improve sanitation, education, and other social services. The sad truth is that the weakest members of society are at risk — the young who need education, the sick who need medical services, the poor who need work. Through no fault of their own they pay the greatest price.

Looking at the financial side, deep indebtedness is a signal to the worldwide financial community that a country is an investment risk, that it is not willing to or is incapable of paying its debts. As a result, such countries are excluded from international financial markets, or must pay more for credit.

A tempting way for a country to obtain higher, quicker revenues is to exploit its own land and its natural resources. Farmers live under pressure to produce more food on small pieces of land. Frequently, they use expensive chemical fertilizers that weaken the soil and poison the environment. Fish reserves are destroyed by excessive fishing. Frequently, forests are cut down by national or multinational corporations, with the resultant displacement of local populations. These facts have global repercussions in rich countries as well: deteriorating conditions in nearby countries, migration, and illegal drugs.

## Christian Tradition

To the extent that international debt contributes to the suffering of the poorest, it stands in contradiction to Catholic teaching about the life and dignity of the human person.

Leviticus 25 describes the Jubilee as a *year of grace* celebrated every fifty years to "free the slaves, pardon debts, and allow each one to regain his own land." The fundamental theme of the Jubilee is that a loving God has made the earth for everyone and that each person has the right to live on it with dignity. The Jubilee reestablishes just relations within society.

Cardinal Etchegaray, whom Pope John Paul II placed in charge of the preparations for the Jubilee, states: "The year 2000 must be a loud call to conversion and to commitment, including commitment on the political and social level. It is a time for reestablishing the rights of the poor and the marginalized so that they can enjoy the earth and its benefits as the Lord's gift to each and every one of his children."

As in the time of the people of Israel, today too the burden of debt falls on the poorest. To remit debts is one of the means to remedy a situation which is intolerable: the ever-deepening misery and exclusion of the poor.

Linking this biblical concept to the new millennium, Pope John Paul II affirms: "Christians should be a voice for all the poor of the world, proposing the Jubilee as an opportune moment to consider, among other things, a notable reduction, if not a total wiping out, of the international debt that weighs down the future of many nations" (*Tertio Millennio Adveniente*, 51).

No boundary counts, whether geographical, cultural, or religious, when one is dealing with human dignity. This is one of the great lessons of the parable of the Good Samaritan: I do not have to define "who is my neighbor"; rather I am invited to make myself "neighbor" to everyone I meet who is in need.

Whoever wishes to enter into the logic of the Jubilee is called to turn his attention to the victims of poverty. For the Church, charity walks hand in hand with justice and expresses itself in solidarity and brotherhood. Christians are called to commit themselves concretely to struggle against the terrible afflictions that burden their brothers and sisters: unemployment, hunger, segregation, and slavery in all its forms.

The Secretary General of the Great Jubilee, Archbishop Crescenzo Sepe, speaks of an "urgent need for reconciliation between the world of the rich and of the poor" that must "manifest itself in concrete ways of acting and in an efficacious search to overcome and eliminate the mechanisms and structures of injustice and inequality."

We recognize, as members of the Congregation of the Mission, how important collaboration is in the service of the poor. The prophetic teaching of St. Vincent de Paul that the poor are our "lords and masters" comes alive for us again as we enter the new millennium. In the same way, the growing rift between rich and poor speaks to us with new urgency. In the General Assembly of 1998 we resolved, together with other members of the Vincentian Family, to work toward the cancellation or reduction of the international debt of poor countries as we commemorate the Jubilee Year. This commitment flows from a desire to understand the evangelical maxims more deeply and make them real in our lives.

## Conclusion

Recognizing that it was impossible for many poor countries to make headway on their debt, in 1996 the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund worked out a plan to reduce the debt. The program, "Heavily Indebted Poor Countries" (HIPC), attempts to reduce the debt to a sustainable level in the poorest nations. However, the help offered often arrives too late and to too few countries.

Two international networks, CIDSE (International Cooperation for Development and Solidarity) and CI (Caritas International) are working together to free poor countries from unpayable debts. To reach this objective they advocate:

1. making the program of HIPC more effective;
2. linking the cancellation of debt with investment in human development;



3. guaranteeing that decisions about help in reducing the debt be made in a transparent manner. The governments and the international financial institutions must share information concerning exactly how help will be used to alleviate the burden of the debt and what conditions are necessary for such help; it is important to create a dialogue between citizen groups and governments about priorities in the national budget;
4. changing the structure of international financial relationships to assure that debtors and creditors work together as equals in negotiations over the debt.

Besides CIDSE and CI, other organizations such as the United States Catholic Conference and Bread for the World state that international debt is the principal cause of poverty and threatens the development of people in the most impoverished countries of the world. They urge that cancellation of the debt be used as a means to free resources for investment in human development along paths that are appropriate to each country. This presupposes a context in which people are free to speak and to be heard, in order to assure that the social and economic reforms adopted are efficacious means for the reduction of poverty and the protection of the environment.

The initiative of the Catholic Church in Italy to reduce the foreign debt of poor countries has two precise objectives: 1) to collect by 2001 a sum of 100 billion lira (54 million dollars) to finance projects for several African countries; 2) to have the Italian government take on the debt contracted by two African countries, so as to wipe out their indebtedness completely.

These initiatives have been described by Bishop Ennio Antonelli, Secretary General of the Italian Episcopal Conference, as a "grand gesture of solidarity" that has three fundamental moments: *"collecting donations until 2001; the Italian government's assuming the debt contracted by two poor countries with Italy; financing an equivalent sum for local development projects in those countries."*

The French Bishops, in a document published in view of the Jubilee, indicate four immediate objectives:

- Annul in 2000 the part of the debt that everyone recognizes as unpayable (\$100 billion). This figure is no higher than the amount given recently to some Asian countries to prevent their economic crisis from having a negative impact on the rest of the world.
- Negotiate new rules of financing in order to avoid excessive indebtedness in the future.
- Set up in the United Nations a Council of Mediation as the place to do future negotiating regarding debts.
- Foster public contributions for social expenditures in poor countries, especially in the areas of education and health.

Each of us can help raise consciousness about the damage created by international debt and encourage others to contribute in an active way to various campaigns within our own countries.

**QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION BY THE CONFRERES:**

1. What is your own personal reaction to contemporary Church teaching on the international debt as described in the writings of Pope John Paul II and the documents of various bishops' conferences?
2. Do you teach or preach about this teaching? If so, what do you say or what method do you use? If not, what might you do?

(ROBERT J. STONE, C.M., translator)

## The Death Penalty

When the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was adopted in 1948, eight countries abolished the death penalty for all crimes. Since then, more than half the world's countries have followed their example. Today, figures from Amnesty International show that 63 countries have abolished the death penalty for all crimes; 16 countries have maintained it for exceptional crimes and for crimes committed in wartime; and 24 countries maintain it on the books, but have in fact abolished it, since no death sentences have been handed down in those countries for the last ten years. Ninety-two countries still practice it, but a number of these are working toward its complete abolition.

In Asia, the death penalty is widely practiced as a deterrent against all types of crimes. It is often meted out on the poorest people and used to eliminate political opponents or low-ranking soldiers who disobey orders. Reports from Amnesty International show that in recent years the number of executions is increasing in Asia and has reached a high level (12,834, of which 92% took place in China).

In Africa, the death penalty has been maintained in the majority of countries. However, a large number of countries have abolished it or are gradually phasing it out. In recent years the number of executions has considerably lessened (620); more than 50% of these took place in Egypt and in Niger.

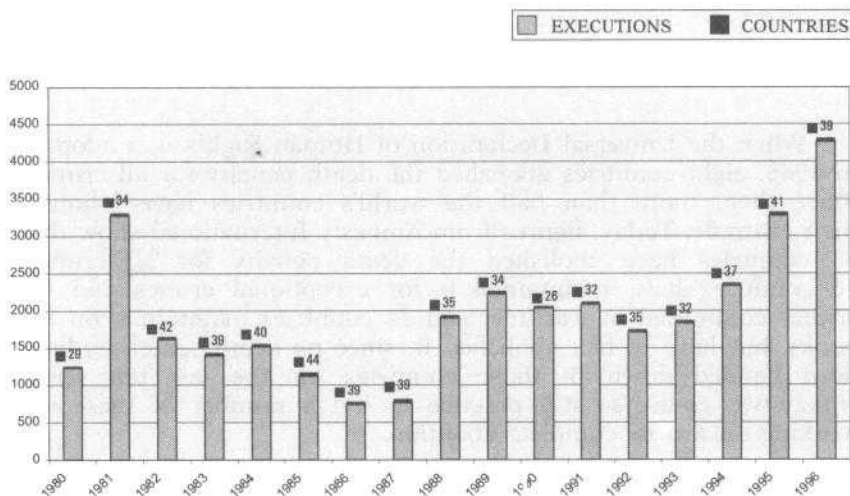
In countries with a Moslem majority the death penalty is very widely practiced. Countries of the former USSR have legislated the death penalty for serious crimes described in Islamic law.

Europe, except for Bosnia and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, has been the place where the movement to abolish capital punishment has been most effective.

In South America, most countries are abolitionist either in law or in practice. Central America, the site of several civil wars, finds itself in a complex situation where, in the midst of considerable violence, abolition of capital punishment exists in fact or is about to be enacted.

Almost all the states in the United States of America have kept the death penalty, but the rate of executions is quite unequal. Texas alone has executed more than the next four states put together: Virginia (64), Florida (39), Missouri (29), Louisiana (24).

## EXECUTIONS IN THE WORLD



Source: Amnesty International

## Contemporary Church Teaching

At the approach of the new millennium, Pope John Paul II calls us to take up the challenge of contemporary Catholic teaching concerning this subject, encouraging us to renew our efforts to stop executions throughout the world.

The Church's position on the defense of life has as its base: a theology in which the human person is the image of God; a philosophy of the dignity of each human being; and the social teaching of the Church, which insists that the state and society are at the service of the human person.

In the New Testament, Jesus rejected violence as a solution to problems. The Gospel reveals God's infinite love for every creature, no matter what its condition or merits. God does not wish the death of a sinner, but his or her conversion. In the Gospel Jesus abhors sin, yet he loves the sinner. His disciples are called to have the same sentiments as the Master did. The sermon on the mount imparts a clear teaching: Jesus excludes vengeance in favor of pardon.

The first edition of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* reiterated a long-held teaching that did not exclude recourse to the death penalty when it was the only possibility to defend human life

against aggression. In the second edition, however, the *Catechism* affirms that today it is possible for the state to combat crime effectively by removing a criminal from society and that cases of capital punishment against the guilty should be "very rare, if not practically nonexistent."

In his encyclical, "The Gospel of Life" (*Evangelium Vitae*, March 25, 1995), Pope John Paul II appealed for the abolition of the death penalty. He said in January 1999 in Saint Louis, "the death penalty is cruel and unnecessary."

Recently, the Holy Father intervened three times against the death penalty: in his Christmas message, *urbi et orbi*, Christmas 1998; in his speeches during his travels to Mexico; and most recently during his pastoral visit to Saint Louis, Missouri.

Public authorities should, of course, remedy violations of personal and social rights. They should impose punishments on the guilty that fit the crime. They should do their utmost to assure, on the one hand, public order and personal safety, and on the other hand to help the guilty change their behavior and be rehabilitated.

The United States Catholic Conference describes the death penalty as a link in the chain of violence and as a manifestation of vengeance in American culture. As it said in *Confronting a Culture of Violence*, "We cannot teach that killing is bad when we ourselves kill." The Conference opposes capital punishment not only because it violates the rights of the condemned but also because it damages all society. We cannot suppress crime by executing criminals, nor can we restore life to innocent victims by taking away the life of the guilty. The death penalty gives the illusion that we can defend life by taking it.

## Analysis

Many groups oppose the death penalty, considering it as a violation of human rights. For a society to impose capital punishment on criminals is to inflict inhuman punishment. The cruelty of the death penalty is clear not only during the execution itself, but also during the period between judgment and execution.

Unfortunately, many throughout the world, including many Catholics, favor the death penalty. Conventional wisdom is convinced that capital punishment is needed to dissuade people from committing crimes. When Governor Pataki of New York signed the law reestablishing the death penalty in 1995, he said: "This will help save lives."

Nevertheless, the majority of sociologists judge that capital punishment does not discourage crime. A survey taken in 1995 by Richard Dieter, including interviews with 386 police officers and

commissioners picked at random, concluded that only one percent of them think that the death penalty is a factor in lessening violent crime. According to them, the most efficacious means would be "the reduction of drug abuse" and "a better political economy and more jobs."

In other studies, 87% of criminologists and 57% of police commissioners are convinced that "debates about the death penalty serve as a diversion for... Parliaments, and avoid concentrating on the real solutions to be put in place against crime."

In the United States the cost of one execution is reported at about \$2 million, or three times the cost of incarcerating someone for 40 years. This cost corresponds roughly to the salary of 48 police officers. A state could alternatively invest such funds in crime prevention programs, drug recovery programs, and maintaining a better prepared police force.

Surveys in many places show that public opinion would favor life sentences without parole as an alternative to the death penalty, provided that the criminal would actually remain in prison for life. For punishment to dissuade from crime, judgment should be handed down with reasonable speed. Lengthy death penalty procedures torture the families of victims, keeping open their wounds for years pending further investigations and trials. Quick trials and life sentences for the worst crimes are also what the families of most victims want.

Wherever the death penalty is applied, there is a risk of condemning the innocent. People have with some frequency been convicted of crimes they did not commit. The execution of an innocent man, Timothy Evans, moved public opinion toward the abolition of the death penalty in Great Britain. In 1975, the governor of Florida pardoned two Black Americans unjustly condemned to death; they had been waiting for twelve years to be executed for crimes committed by others. In February 1994, Russian authorities executed a drifter accused of 52 murders. The authorities admitted that before this execution, they had unjustly executed a person accused of one of these same murders. Meanwhile another innocent man, a suspect in the same murders, had committed suicide.

The death penalty, moreover, has often been used arbitrarily. The laws of certain countries stipulate capital punishment for political acts and for illegal assembly (as in China and Iraq), or for non-violent economic or political acts (former USSR), for financial speculation, bribery, theft, counterfeiting; or for immorality (adultery in Iran, homosexuality in Yemen), or actions against the state religion (apostasy in Sudan, Saudi Arabia, and Iran; and blasphemy in Pakistan). Ethnic origins and economic conditions sometimes play a determining role in applying the death penalty. Membership in economically disadvantaged groups entails a poorer defense, since the courts often appoint low-paid attorneys for them. This means

that often penalties are disproportionately inflicted on those who are least able to defend themselves. In Saudi Arabia, trials sometimes do not respect international rules, since the right to a legal defense or the assistance of an attorney is denied to the defendants.

## Conclusion

In the spirit of the coming Jubilee we join the Holy Father in calling for the abolition of the death penalty. Together we join our forces in rejecting capital punishment. It is important for pastors to preach and for professors to teach respect for the right to life for all. Through education and prayer, we commit ourselves to work perseveringly toward the abolition of the death penalty and to struggle against a culture of death.

While the rejection of the death penalty receives strong support from various religious groups, non-believers too propose strong reasons for its abolition: putting someone to death inflicts a punishment that violates the right to life; it is irreversible and contradicts the principle of the rehabilitation of the guilty; a state that kills legitimizes other forms of violence in society.

"No to the Death Penalty" is the title of the International Campaign for the Moratorium, 2000, announced by the Sant'Egidio Community. It is directed toward all who are preparing to live the Holy Year intensely as well as toward those who dream of a new world of peace.

This campaign affirms the need to abolish capital punishment and proposes suspending executions while waiting for this goal to be attained.

It is directed toward those who believe in this cause so that their activities will not be isolated, and also toward those without the same convictions, asking them at least to join in pressing for a moratorium on the death penalty beginning in the year 2000. In other words, it calls for a cease-fire and for launching a debate, recognizing that even persons convinced of the need for the death penalty do not admit its use lightly. Hundreds of thousands of signatures have already been gathered on all continents. The goal is to gather millions in order to carry more weight as the proposal for universal abolition of the death penalty is presented to representative groups, beginning with the United Nations.

This goal is ambitious but realizable. The Community of Sant'Egidio is working already with Amnesty International as well as with other lay and religious organizations. This initiative has aroused the interest of an enormous number of persons who desire to become actively involved.

*For further information on this topic, one can contact:*

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**Internet: Sant'Egidio:** <http://www.santegidio.org/>

**Amnesty International:** <http://www.amnesty.org/>

**QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION BY THE CONFRERES:**

1. What is your own personal reaction to contemporary Church teaching on capital punishment as described in the writings of Pope John Paul II, the Catechism of the Catholic Church, and the documents of various bishops' conferences?
2. Do you teach or preach about this teaching? If so, what do you say or what method do you use? If not, what might you do?

(JOHN E. RYBOLT, C.M., translator)



# The Jubilee in St. Vincent's Thought

by Antonio Orcajo, C.M.

*Province of Madrid*

There is no Christian, with a sincere desire for conversion to the Gospel, who does not experience a deep joy about the proximity of the Great Jubilee for the year 2000. Even the small communities, which have sprung up in this time for the service of the Church and the world, are taking pains to celebrate with yearning the passage from the second to the third millennium. All those with a sincere heart have received with gratitude, not only the Apostolic Letter *Tertio Millennio Adveniente* (TMA) of Pope John Paul II, published November 10, 1994, but many other instructions referring to the Holy Year, trying to make their lives better before such a relevant event.

News of the Vincentian Family has reached us from everywhere, from the farthest corners of the world, about the projects the Missionaries have programmed to commemorate the imminent Jubilee celebration. Not a few confreres have already picked up the teachings of St. Vincent de Paul to enrich themselves and the communities which they lead with the grace of the Holy Year according to the example of their founder. If we look through the literary work of St. Vincent, it is not difficult to extract his thoughts on the theme of the Jubilee, above all starting with works already finished about this theme and which, in part, we reproduced almost word for word in *Vincentiana*.<sup>1</sup>

## 1. I have known several jubilees

Through the correspondence and conferences of St. Vincent we know about the jubilees celebrated in his time. The saint alludes to them to his correspondents in 1634, 1636, 1641, 1645, 1648, 1653, 1656. Of these, three principal jubilees merit our attention: those convoked in 1641, 1653, and 1656 by Urban VIII (1623-1644), Innocent X (1644-1655) and Alexander VII (1655-1667) respectively. On April 17, 1653 St. Vincent made this confession to the Daughters of Charity: *"I have known several jubilees, but perhaps I have never*

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. A. ORCAJO, *El Gran Jubileo del año 2.000 y los Jubileos en tiempo de san Vicente*, in "Anales C.M.," n° 3, mayo-junio 1997, pp. 232-244.

*fulfilled them.*"<sup>2</sup> There is no doubt about the first part. What is not so evident is that he never fulfilled a jubilee. The *perhaps* of the saint obliges us to suspend judgment, although, given his great love of Jesus evangelizer of the poor, with whom he desired to identify himself, we are inclined to think that he fulfilled some of them. But only God knows and there is no reason to waste more ink in more speculations. In October of 1641 he wrote to St. Louise de Marillac: *"I have resolved to make a small retreat for the Jubilee, and I have begun it today. I commend myself to your prayers."*<sup>3</sup> That shows the care he placed in obtaining the remission of guilt and the temporal punishment merited for his sins.

Apart from his personal dispositions, the eagerness with which he desired that others — the Missionaries, the Daughters of Charity and the simple people — would prepare themselves to worthily receive the gifts of the Time of Grace or Holy Year is indisputable. There are many communications which he directed to his companions, by way of information, about the extraordinary acts, either in the community or outside it, for the Jubilees. In the letter just cited, he adds at the end: *"After the retreat we will speak about the way they (the sisters) and you yourself can fulfill the Jubilee too."*<sup>4</sup>

Some of the news that he gives us is on the national level and agrees with the history of France in the Seventeenth Century. He says, for example, in the conference to the Daughters of Charity on April 17, 1653: *"The king himself makes these stations on foot. The queen does what she can; she says: I am old. I cannot do it all on foot."*<sup>5</sup> This fact agrees with the information of some historians: *The jubilee indulgences particularly interested the masses of the people, headed by the sovereigns. Anne of Austria was very assiduous about the jubilees; and Louis XIV participated in them without delay or concealment, with regularity and fervor.*<sup>6</sup>

St. Vincent's concern to catechize the faithful jumps out at us, as well as the excellent qualities with which he was blessed for instructing and animating the people. After explaining the conditions for fulfilling the Jubilee, he humorously asked a sister: *"You, sister, who are so young; let us see what you know. How many evils are there in mortal sin?"*<sup>7</sup> The sister answered correctly, also to the eleven questions which followed. At the end, St. Vincent could not contain his joy in confirming the good memory of that country girl who was ready to do everything to fulfill the Jubilee.

<sup>2</sup> SVP IX, 610.

<sup>3</sup> SVP II, 191.

<sup>4</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>5</sup> SVP IX, 621.

<sup>6</sup> M. FEUILLAS, *Jubilé*, en "Dictionnaire du Grand Siècle," Fayard 1990.

<sup>7</sup> SVP IX, 618.

## 2. Many people talk about the Jubilee without knowing what it is

In the past, just as today, the term, Jubilee, is on the tongues of many, but there are few who know its true meaning and historic origin. As was to be expected, the doctrine expounded as such in TMA as in the catechesis of St. Vincent coincide substantially; they are only different in small details, above all in the area of indulgences, which the passage of time has imposed. There exists, in effect, an uninterrupted doctrinal tradition concerning the Jubilees, from the first one in the year 1300, convoked by Boniface VIII, to the last in 1983 (an extraordinary Holy Year for the 1950th anniversary of the death and resurrection of Christ) convoked by John Paul II.

The saint's declaration is still true: "*Many talk about the jubilee without knowing what it is.*"<sup>8</sup> From that fact arose the concern for forming everyone well about the jubilee celebrations. The conferences which best condense his thought about the jubilee were given to the Daughters of Charity (Conferences of October 15, 1641; April 17, 1653 and December 14, 1656). We refer the reader to these conferences if he wants to know many of the details which are not commented on here.

St. Vincent begins, in his catechesis, with the meaning of the term, jubilee, and explains that: "*That word means joy and jubilation; and the Jubilee Year means a year of joyfulness.*"<sup>9</sup> In reality Jubilee derives from the Hebrew word, *jobhel*, which means horn. That is because the beginning of the Jubilee Year, which is repeated every fifty years, is announced by the sound of a ram's horn, as the Old Testament indicates (Lv 25).

Perfectly understanding and explaining the vocabulary in question, St. Vincent proceeds, through questions and answers, to explain that the Jubilee is an extraordinary time of grace, forgiveness and blessing, a special moment for the conversion of all believers and, for us in particular, another reason for our *complete self-gift to God*, and an impetus to live consecrated to charity and the service of the poor. The saint did not lack skill in pointing out the differences between the Jubilees of the Old Testament and those convoked by the popes in Rome.

## 3. Have the intention of conversion during this Jubilee

The theme of conversion and penance brings together all of the Vincentian teachings about the Jubilee celebrations. In effect, it is about not committing sins in the future — the negative aspect of

<sup>8</sup> SVP IX, 609.

<sup>9</sup> SVP IX, 47, 610-611; X, 229.

conversion — and putting on the spirit of Jesus Christ — the positive aspect. According to the Augustinian definition of sin, conversion consists in *returning to God and leaving behind creatures* which have separated us from him, with the true purpose of always remaining united to the Lord.<sup>10</sup> In other words, it means that, on the occasion of the Jubilee, "*all Christians, from now on, will serve you, Savior of our souls, with fidelity, so that every community might live the perfection that you require of them.*"<sup>11</sup>

When he treats the theme of the perfection required by God for a Missionary or Daughter of Charity, St. Vincent quickly moves to the urgency of renewing oneself in the *proper spirit* of the community formed by the particular virtues. On June 14, 1656, he writes to a priest of his Congregation, exhorting him to speak with simplicity in view of the good results that the simple preaching of the Jesuits about the Jubilee had produced: "*I hope that this example will confirm us in the practice of never speaking in public or in private without simplicity, humility and charity.*"<sup>12</sup> This advice is like a drop of water which gets lost in the immense ocean of exhortations on the virtues which constitute the spirit of the missionary community.

In Vincent's judgment, it is not enough to bear the name of Missionaries or Daughters of Charity, but rather, convincing signs of life are required. "*Have the intention during this jubilee, he said to the sisters, of converting yourselves into true Daughters of Charity; because it is not enough to be Daughters of Charity in name. It is necessary to truly be so.*"<sup>13</sup> Later, returning to the theme of the spirit of the Company: "*During this time, the Daughters of Charity have to ask the Lord for those three beautiful virtues: charity, humility and simplicity.*"<sup>14</sup>

According to the saint, the process of conversion necessarily carries with it a strengthening of the theological virtues and the practice of prayer. *What does it mean when we are invited to allow ourselves to be guided by the Spirit, to enjoy the freedom of the children of God, "living those beautiful virtues which are the treasures of Christians and are like the suns which warm our souls?"*<sup>15</sup>

In particular, charity towards God and humanity is the indispensable condition for fulfilling the Jubilee. Returning again to the spirit of the community, St. Vincent points out that nothing is as contrary to God's plan as sins against charity whether by murmuring,

<sup>10</sup> Cf. SVP IX, 46-52.

<sup>11</sup> SVP X, 242.

<sup>12</sup> SVP V, 632.

<sup>13</sup> SVP IX, 49.

<sup>14</sup> SVP IX, 621.

<sup>15</sup> SVP IX, 611.

selfishness or animosity of some against others.<sup>16</sup> Charity also has a penitential dimension which is fulfilled by almsgiving. *"It is said that it is necessary to give alms.... The Company will give alms for everyone since you are all poor.... In our house (St. Lazare) we do it like that."*<sup>17</sup>

If we pass to the area of prayer, the exhortations of St. Vincent to be faithful to the encounter with the Lord during the time of Jubilee are repeated at every step. Whatever the reasons were for moving the Roman pontiff to call the Jubilee, it is necessary to ask in prayer *"for his intentions, for the conversion of sinners, for the sanctification of the clergy, for the purification of so many heresies which have afflicted the Church for the last three hundred years, for peace, for the king and queen and all the people, and above all that the scourge of the plague might pass."*<sup>18</sup> There is no good or evil in the civil or ecclesial society which does not call forth a prayer of thanksgiving or mercy from the Lord.

Finally, St. Vincent stopped to explain the conditions for fulfilling the Jubilee, such as going to confession and communion, visiting the stations, giving alms and asking for the needs of the Church and the intentions of the Holy Father. If the conditions are fulfilled in a spirit of true conversion, forgiveness of guilt and remission of temporal punishment are obtained. Such extraordinary grace is given by virtue of the communion of saints, whose treasures of merit deposited in the Church, are applied to the faithful: merits from the life, death and resurrection of Christ; those of the Virgin Mary and of all the saints. In that faith lies the concession of indulgences.

#### **4. The opening of the Jubilee will give our priests a lot to do**

Perhaps what is most surprising in St. Vincent, in reference to the Jubilees, is the insistent joy with which he communicated to his companions the labor of preaching missions which they had to take on during this *time of grace* and how they had to take advantage of them to evangelize the poor. This joy came from the satisfaction of fulfilling the end for which the Congregation of the Mission had been born. To cite a few of the many examples, the following are worth mention.

The first, very meaningful because it affects his own person, is directed to the Duchess d'Aiguillon, who was concerned about the health of Monsieur Vincent, who was ready to go on a mission to Sevrans, despite his seventy-two years and his delicate health. In the

<sup>16</sup> Cf. SVP X, 238.

<sup>17</sup> SVP X, 237.

<sup>18</sup> SVP X, 234, 237.

letter, dated May 14, 1653, he implores the duchess to present his excuses to the assembly which they were about to hold, and which he could not attend, because "*it seemed to me that it would offend God if everything possible was not done for the poor people of the countryside during this Jubilee.*"<sup>19</sup>

Louis Abelly, the first biographer of Monsieur Vincent, referring to this mission, commented: "*He even went on the missions during the Jubilee, and worked in them with great results, and a wonderful edification for all who saw this elderly saint, at such an advanced age and with so many aches and pains, zealously dedicating himself to catechizing, preaching, hearing confessions and consecrating himself to other similar acts.*"<sup>20</sup>

Abelly notes, on the occasion of the national Jubilee granted to France in 1648, that the first missionaries sent to Madagascar, Nacquart and Gondrée, devoted themselves during the voyage "*to preparing those who were on the ship, around 120 persons, through general confessions to participate in the graces and indulgences of the Jubilee.*" Arriving at the island, "*one of their first works was to obtain the spiritual well-being of the French and prepare them to fulfill the Jubilee which had been sent to them from France.*"<sup>21</sup>

Several years later, on March 17, 1656, on the occasion of another Jubilee, he wrote to Fr. Ozenne, superior of the priests of the Mission in Warsaw: "*The Jubilee will open soon in Paris. God has given us a means for attracting people to our missions.*"<sup>22</sup> We should say in passing that Warsaw was ahead of Paris in the Jubilee called by Alexander VII in 1656, just after assuming the papacy. In Tunis also, before the archbishop had done it in Paris, Jean Le Vacher had promulgated the same Jubilee so that the captive slaves could participate in it.<sup>23</sup>

A little later than the letter sent to Ozenne, the founder of the Mission wrote to Fr. Jean Martin, on April 14 of the same year 1656: "*Our priests have not stopped going to three missions at the same time and preparing themselves to go to other places for the Jubilee.*"<sup>24</sup> When the year 1656 ended, he wrote to Fr. Get, superior of Marseille, on February 9, 1657: "*The Jubilee which will be celebrated in Toulon is creating work for Fr. Huguier, and he offers you a chance to go there or to send someone to help the galley slaves to fulfill the Jubilee,*

<sup>19</sup> SVP IV, 586-587.

<sup>20</sup> L. ABELLY, *Vida del Venerable Siervo de Dios Vicente de Paúl*, Edit. CEME, Salamanca 1994, p. 616.

<sup>21</sup> *Id.*, p. 335 and 338.

<sup>22</sup> SVP V, 571.

<sup>23</sup> Cf. SVP XI, 321.

<sup>24</sup> SVP V, 595; cf. VI, 150, 152.

as he asked you."<sup>25</sup> In the end the predictions the saint made to Fr. Crowley, at the beginning of the year 1656, were accomplished: *The opening of the Jubilee is about to happen in this diocese, which will give our priests a lot to do, since they will have to go to the countryside to prepare the poor people.*"<sup>26</sup>

St. Vincent was so conscious of the Jubilee celebrations that he had no qualms in granting exceptions from the general rule of not preaching in the cities where there is a Bishopric, as provided for by the Contract of Foundation of the Mission and the Bull of pontifical approval of the C.M. On the third of May 1656, he wrote to Fr. Dupont: *"You can preach in Treguier, since the Bishop commands it and it is for only eight days and on the occasion of the Jubilee, which is something extraordinary. These circumstances are too important not to grant some exceptions to the general rule."*<sup>27</sup>

In all of these declarations lies the conviction which explains the charism of the founder and his Congregation, highlighted during the time of the Jubilee celebrations: the evangelization of the poor according to the example of Jesus of Nazareth, sent by the Father and anointed by the Spirit for the salvific mission to the world. Completely in agreement with what TMA of John Paul II would highlight three centuries later, the saint could have said with the pope: *"Every Jubilee makes reference to the time of grace and the messianic mission of Christ.... He is the one who announces the good news to the poor. He is the one who brings liberty to captives, frees the oppressed and returns sight to the blind (Mt 11:4-5; Lk 7:22). In this way he brings about a year of the Lord's grace, which he announces not only in words, but above all by works. The Jubilee, a year of the Lord's grace, is a characteristic of Jesus' activity and not only the chronological definition of a certain anniversary."*<sup>28</sup>

If the Jubilee year is a time of joy, as St. Vincent points out, *"we cannot better insure our eternal happiness than by living and dying in the service of the poor, in the arms of Providence and in a real renunciation of ourselves in order to follow Jesus."*<sup>29</sup> These words written to Jean Barreau, French consul in Algiers, in the specific circumstances of a Jubilee, are a synopsis of St. Vincent's thoughts on the joy which is experienced in carrying out the missionary vocation, which has as its operating principle popular missions and missions *ad gentes*.

Certainly the areas for evangelization by the missionaries are vast and varied, although the missions continue to be their preferred

<sup>25</sup> SVP VI, 179.

<sup>26</sup> SVP V, 574.

<sup>27</sup> SVP V, 605.

<sup>28</sup> JOHN PAUL II, *Apostolic Letter Tertio Millennio Adveniente*, 11.

<sup>29</sup> SVP III, 392.

parcel today. The remembrance of the Areopagus of Athens, where St. Paul preached, calls to mind new areopagi where the missionaries can live out channel their zeal. In effect, as TMA says: *"Today there are many and diverse areopagi; they are the vast fields of modern civilization and culture, of politics and the economy. The more the West strays from its Christian roots, the more it becomes a mission field, in the form of different areopagi."*<sup>30</sup>

### 5. Blessed Virgin... help us obtain this grace

The Vincentian references to Mary, on the occasion of the Jubilee, are both implicit and explicit. Except for the conference of December 14, 1656, the memory of Mary passes by almost silently. Differing from the other teachings of the saint in which the Mother of God and our Mother is presented as an admirable example of Christ's disciple, here she is only contemplated in two moments. The first, while explaining the obstacles that make obtaining the graces of the Jubilee difficult, he points out that the desire to be comfortable does not permit us *"to experience the poverty of the Lord and the Blessed Virgin."*<sup>31</sup> This reference to the Virgin is a bit irrelevant.

On the other hand, the invocation of the Virgin, at the end of the same conference, is somewhat more significant because it highlights the intercessory power of the Mother of God, besides declaring her the Mother of the Company: *"Blessed Virgin, you who are the Mother of the Company, obtain for us the grace of your Son and peace for the Church."*<sup>32</sup> On this occasion, our speaker did not have to give any other explanations. The whole room knew that the graces asked for were none other than those of the Jubilee, grace which the Virgin Mary, mediatrix and Queen of peace, obtains for everyone through the omnipotence of her Son.

What we have written up until here, although short, is sufficiently indicative of St. Vincent's behavior during the Jubilee. In particular his teachings on the necessity of revitalizing the spirit and the ministries proper to the community are completely up to date. I like to think that today he would not counsel his friends to fulfill the Jubilee in a different way.

(JOHN P. PRAGER, C.M., translator)

<sup>30</sup> JOHN PAUL II, *Apostolic Letter Tertio Millennio Adveniente*, 57.

<sup>31</sup> SVP X, 239.

<sup>32</sup> SVP X, 242.



# Toward the Third Millennium

## The History of the Congregation of the Mission: An Event For Which To Ask Forgiveness?

by Luigi Mezzadri, C.M.

*Province of Rome*

The congregation of the Mission at the dawn of the year 2000 will be 375 years old. Nearly 400 years. Notwithstanding its age, the Congregation is to be found on all continents, holds many positions of honor, continues to attract young people, and does not seem to have betrayed the intentions of its origins.

We think it time nonetheless to balance matters. It is clear that attempting to balance is a subjective exercise. Every judgment can be one sided. It can indulge in self-glorification, or give rise to corrosive criticism. It can be sentimental or self-absorbing or self-degenerating. It could evoke a "Magnificat," or a "Miserere."

We will avoid all this by a sober historical reading of our past. I do not pretend that it will be exhaustive. I will limit myself to considering the first century and a half of our history (1625-1789), this being the period that I know best.<sup>1</sup>

I state in advance that I will not be searching for excuses.<sup>2</sup> It is clear, as we shall see, that we have made many mistakes. The question that I ask myself, however, is this: Is it fair to look for excuses for past deeds which we neither committed, for which we were not responsible, and for decisions made in a context different from our own? It has been proved that some of ours held slaves. Certainly not in Paris or Rome, but, yes, in the islands of Madagascar. Should we ask the Superior General to issue a public condemnation of some confreres, who obviously are no longer under his jurisdiction, but under that of the Almighty, to be held

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<sup>1</sup> For more details, please refer to our works: L. MEZZADRI - J.M. ROMÁN, *Histoire de la Congrégation de la Mission I*, Paris 1994; L. MEZZADRI - F. ONNIS, *La Congregazione della Missione nel Settecento. I. Francia e Italia*, Roma 1999; *Le Missioni popolari della Congregazione della Missione nei secoli XVII-XVIII*, edited by L. Mezzadri, 2 vol., Roma 1999.

<sup>2</sup> The question of "asking pardon" by the representatives of the Church based on the judgment of historians is something else.

accountable for having held slaves in their houses, who perhaps considered themselves fortunate for being in the service of the missionaries?

I do not intend to arrive at a gratifying "apologia," as if our past was a smooth road, a kind of golden age for our missionaries, all deemed to be models, all observant of the rules, all examples for the apostolate.

My task will be that of trying to "understand." If we examine this period we will be able to identify the following points:

1. Fidelity to the charism.
2. The perfect fitting into the state and into the Church.
3. The ongoing progress of the mission.

1. Regarding *Fidelity to the Charism*, we must consider that this was the major preoccupation of our superiors general. In 1668 the General Assembly approved the means of preserving the primitive spirit, understood in the sense of "loving what he (Vincent) loved," and performing the works that he taught us "amare quod amavit, et opere exercere quod docuit."<sup>3</sup>

For Rene Almeras this fidelity meant a spirit of prayer, fidelity to the rules, vigilance on the part of the superior to avoid the relaxation of the same in their houses. What Jean Bonnet admired most in St. Vincent, was "the perfect separation from the world."<sup>4</sup> Reading Jacquier's circular of 1771, it would be interesting to see how Almeras and Jacquier differed.<sup>5</sup> The fidelity desired by these superiors was a static thing. According to them, St. Vincent founded a perfect community, well organized, which could not be legitimately changed. Apart from the "Constitutiones Selectae," the Congregation could touch nothing of what was left it as a heritage from the founder.

We had however a very characteristic model for a missionary: an interior man, taciturn, gifted with a "good spirit," humble, culturally not very sparkling, calm, cordial, and loving of regularity. Preaching methods were gradually devised, what prayers to say, what is permitted or forbidden. There was no room for improvising, or for local initiative. Missionaries had the same order of day in Paris as in Rome or Warsaw; they dressed in the same style, and had the same practices. The guiding virtue was uniformity.

It was to this that Superior General Jacquier referred when the Italian brothers complained that the habit that they wore left them

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<sup>3</sup> *Recueil des principales circulaires des supérieurs généraux de la Congrégation de la Mission* I, Paris 1877, 97 [to be cited later as RC I, ...].

<sup>4</sup> RC I, 389-400.

<sup>5</sup> RC II, 74-79.

open to derision as urchins. In the circular letter of September 1, 1774 the Superior General wrote:

*"The diversity in the way we dress gives rise to different modes of thinking among us and others, and these various opinions little by little destroy our unity of feelings."*<sup>6</sup>

The long hoped for change happened the following year, not however through the efforts of the superiors, as it should have been, but through the intervention of the new Pope, Pius VI. The Superior General, Father Jacquier, thereupon, issued a circular letter:

*"The Supreme Pontiff having made us understand through the Nuncio the reason that led him to wish for a change in the religious habit of our brothers, we offered our humble objections in order, if possible, to prevent this change.... His Holiness not wishing to agree to our humble objections stated in his letter that the style of the habit is to be changed. Nothing remains but to show our docility and our respectful submission to his wishes, following through on what he wants, which is what we have agreed to in a letter written to the Nuncio. Now act so that this is implemented with as little noise and publicity as possible."*<sup>7</sup>

Another example may illustrate the point. On June 10, 1734 Bonnet sent out a circular letter in which he expressed disapproval concerning "the abuse of bathing."<sup>8</sup> In themselves, baths were considered harmless, healthy and convenient, both "for minor as well as for major ills." Even when they were used "for pleasure," for cleanliness, for the natural refreshment of the body. There is nothing objectionable, so long as "the rules of reserve, of modesty, and of shyness are observed." But "it so often happens" Bonnet noted, "that it goes too far in many ways." He therefore prohibited the members of the Congregation from bathing in public places, either "for cleanliness or for pleasure." At the same time he urged the superiors to see to it that the prohibition is respected. He was obviously unaware that there were cleaner people around, who washed more often. A fact experienced in Asia, for example, where our missionaries presented themselves with a body odor, which was not the "odor of sanctity."

The signature ministries of the mission were preserved.

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<sup>6</sup> RC II, 101.

<sup>7</sup> L. MEZZADRI - F. ONNIS, *La Congregazione della Missione nel Settecento. I. Francia e Italia*, Roma 1999, 236.

<sup>8</sup> RC I, 427-432.

Through the 17th and 18th centuries, the sons of St. Vincent were held in high regard because of their zeal for the missions. They were different from the Jesuits with their "mission centers." Our missions were longer. Ours also differed from "penitential" missions in the Neapolitan and Franciscan traditions. With our missionaries working the towns for a lengthy period of time, it is clear that they could work with good effect. The better-evangelized towns were those that could better withstand the onslaught of secularization.

Then came the seminaries. In France they became the first work of the Congregation in so far as the bishops of that country entrusted more than half of their seminaries to the sons of St. Vincent. The same was true about Poland. Our seminaries were esteemed not so much because of the quality of studies, which were generally modest, but for the good spiritual and pastoral formation, which they provided. It was said that by the end of the seventeenth hundreds, the Sulpicians formed the bishops, and the missionaries formed the pastors.

From this standpoint the missionaries held onto the ministries favored by the Saint. The hospitals were abandoned. The two terms mission and charity, which for Vincent were inseparable and which left his heart always open to the demands of spiritual and material poverty, were reduced only to spiritual charity. Pier Francesco Giordanini, a great missionary who died in 1720, cites the evangelical mandate to cure the sick and to cleanse lepers, and concludes "that only spiritual healing is being done."<sup>9</sup>

2. If we consider the *relations between the Congregation with the State and the Church*, two points must be taken into account: After St. Vincent's death, the Congregation emphasized its French character. This resulted in serious tensions with the Holy See. It came to the point where Louis XIV imposed on a General Assembly, that of 1697, a French Superior General (Pierron), and there resulted a division within the Congregation. This state of tension with the Holy See was to linger.<sup>10</sup>

Meantime while the hospitals disappeared and Madagascar was abandoned (even the French colonials did the same), the Congregation took charge of "royal parishes...." After Fontainebleau the missionaries assumed control of two more symbols of the monarchy, like Les Invalides, Versailles (the two parishes), and the chapel of the royal court, St. Cloud, the royal college of St. Cyr, and also in London.

<sup>9</sup> *Le Missioni popolari della Congregazione della Missione nei secoli XVII-XVIII*, edited by L. Mezzadri, vol. 2, Rome 1999.

<sup>10</sup> Please refer to my work: *Gallicanesimo e vita religiosa*, in "Divus Thomas" 76 (1973), 65-109; for additional information: L. MEZZADRI - F. ONNIS, *La Congregazione della Missione nel Settecento. I. Francia e Italia*, Roma 1999.

Up to the time of the revolution we know that the procession which opened the Estates General took place between our parishes of Notre Dame and St. Louis. Furthermore the first attacks on the symbols of power were the sacking of St. Lazare and Les Invalides (July 13, 1789), even before the attack on the Bastille. But we were the ones at St. Lazare and at Les Invalides.

This led to choosing a Gallican theology in France, and an ultramontane theology in Italy, but above all there was a strong adherence to the seat of power. At the time when the oath of "Civil Constitution of the Clergy," was in effect, many of our confreres subscribed to the oath. The Congregation gave two bishops to the "constitutional clergy," Jean Baptiste Guillaume Gratien, (or Graziani), superior of the seminary of Chartres, and Nicholas Philbert, pastor of Sedan, named bishop of the Ardennes. This latter justified taking the oath by claiming that he was always taught to obey the legal authority. It is noteworthy that after the revolution these happenings were kept quiet. There was talk of "martyrs," but nothing was said about "traitors." By this I do not wish to pass judgment on those who under stress made difficult and risk-laden decisions. One thinks of Adrien Lamourette. He had already left the Congregation when he was made bishop of Lyons, after the legitimate bishop fled the country. So while the real shepherd from abroad kept urging his priests not to flee as he, the "evil shepherd" had done the interloper Lamourette stayed at his post until his death. While not recognized as a martyr, his behavior was truly heroic.

In any case this close relationship with civil power, especially in the missions, had immediate advantages in so far as our people were protected by France. But it afforded those struggling against colonialism a pretext for considering the missionaries of being spies or allies of the colonial powers something that only a prejudiced and petty mind could allege.

3. Regarding the *Missions Ad Gentes*, we know that during the age of discovery and beyond (from about 1492), the missionaries' imperative was "salvation of souls." Whenever the missionaries departed, they knew how difficult it would be to return. In one of the regulations issued to the missionaries destined for Madagascar, we read: "When embarking on a sea voyage, the missionaries must be ready for heaven."<sup>11</sup>

If we remember the brothers Perboyre, we can see how this would be true. However, when the missionaries left they were told to be zealous, brave, not involved in material things, grounded only on their faith in God, and on the weapons of the Europeans. "Propaganda Fide" offered these timely points to missionaries in a

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<sup>11</sup> *Règles de conduite pour ceux qui vont aux Isles de France et de Bourbon*, 3.

famous instruction of 1659. Missionaries in Madagascar, however, were evidently not able to derive any benefit from that instruction, although successive missionary expeditions were able to profit therefrom.

During that era two missionary methods were in conflict: One, that valued the local culture and the other that did not. The question is: How did ours, be it in China or on Madagascar, deal with the problem?

In China during the first missionary expedition ours aligned themselves decisively against the Jesuits, who upheld the "civil" character of certain actions, such as insensations and prostrations before shrines of their deceased and before domestic altars. These actions were called "Chinese rites." Our first missionaries (Appiani, Pedrini and Mullener) had learned the language, but had maintained a European outlook which the Congregation was not in a position to change, because apart from exhortations to zeal there was not a careful cultural formation for the missions.

In Madagascar our missionaries promoted the policy of a mass Christianization of the slaves that had been brought there by the India Company.

In the eighteen hundreds a significant change took place. Especially in China the missionaries exhibited a serious interest in the local culture. They had noted sinologists, experts in the local cultural environment. Peking was a noted cultural center. In Madagascar as well, we had important figures such as Albert Caulier (1723-1795), who composed "An Abridged Catechism in the Language of Madagascar."

## Conclusions

While clocks throughout the world count down the hours that separate us from the new millennium, we think it useful to propose these avenues for reflection:

1. We often compare ourselves with the Community of the past. But is the comparison a fair one, or are we comparing diverse realities? Are we trying to match up the technical successes of our time, with the limits of the past? I believe consequently that we must avoid the pointless criticisms of the way of life of the old missionaries' ways that perhaps are strange to us, but were suitable for the times.
2. The missionaries of the past perhaps stressed certain values like interiority, uniformity and regularity but they were highly esteemed and sought after. Our houses had prestige.
3. In the past we were protected by the state. (In Europe we were the wards of the governments, while in the countries then called

"mission lands," we came under the protection of the colonial powers). The question to ask is, are we today in a position to risk refusing that protective net? Freedom has a price, but also a dignity. An Irish Columban wrote: "If you take away dignity, you take away liberty."

4. There is much talk of "inculturation." There is a question of seeing if the appeal for the missions launched in 1992, and given impetus by the present Superior General, finds us ready and in tune with the mission of the Church. We might ascertain this by seeing how they are specifically prepared with appropriate courses directed to the missions, and if pastoral practices in foreign lands bear a western stamp, or rather seek to be influenced in the culture to be evangelized.
5. A question, which reflects past situations, could be the following: Do we have the sense of Church? Are we accustomed to "feel with the Church"? It is probably difficult to draw this out from all the documents, which would be wrong to ignore. There is a line leading us to the formation of the concept of Church, of evangelization and promotion of the faith, of social doctrine, of mission, which forms an important route which draws us near to the threshold of hope as we are to enter the new millennium.

(STEPHEN J. INDIA, C.M., translator)





# VINCENTIAN

# BIBLIOGRAPHY

LUIGI MEZZADRI, C.M.

*Giubilei e Anni Santi. Storia, significato e devozioni*

Published by Edizioni San Paolo, Turin, Italy, 1999 (293 pages)

This collaborative work, edited by Luigi Mezzadri, is the first complete, concise history in a scientific style on the 24 jubilees of the Church, from 1300 to 1975. For each jubilee there is an indication of how it came to be, which pope proclaimed it, how and when it was celebrated, how many faithful participated, what were the most important facts and personalities who characterized it. Moreover, there is a description of the most significant rites and ceremonies, the usages which characterized each year, the devotions required of the pilgrims in order to gain the indulgence, and the principal holy places. The authors make use of numerous citations taken from contemporary sources. Each jubilee is inserted in an organic manner into the broader context of Church history, and the account, subdivided into seven chapters (one for each century), is developed in chronological order. Thus, the progressive transition from the medieval wait for a collective conversion to the commitment to personal salvation is grasped. In reading these pages one can gather the social and cultural dimension of the event which, throughout the centuries, knew how to conserve intact its fascination and has acquired ever real significance.

LUIGI MEZZADRI, C.M.

*Storia della Carità*

Published by Editoriale Jaca Book, Milan, Italy, 1999 (104 pages)

This work intends to recount the "History of the Church" in a new way. Traditional volumes speak little of the poor or speak only of certain ones (St. Francis). The great mass of the poor is ignored.

They are the majority, but it is as if they did not exist. They are the "voiceless," because they have no importance. For this reason, they leave no trace in history and yet they have a right to history. The manuals say something more about charity.

This volume attempts to bring out the relationship poor-Church and to study this important aspect of the life of the Church; that is, the perennial reference to the poor and to make itself the Church of the poor. This is the theme of charity. The relationship Church-poor cannot be reduced to that of who gives alms and who receives them. The importance is not giving but rather sharing from the heart, for charity is richer when it is more gratuitous. It was not always so; on the contrary, this aim of charity has always been a challenge for Christianity. Writing a history of charity is writing a history of this challenge. In six dense chapters, the author traces the characteristics that ecclesial charity has had in the course of the centuries and tries to read Church history in the light of how much was done for the poor, collecting the outstanding moments in an account that is well-developed, clear and rich throughout the story.

JACK MELITO, C.M.

*Saint Vincent de Paul. Windows on his vision*

Published in the United States, 1998 (170 pages)

The book collects a series of articles on St. Vincent, his life and his spirituality, which the author began writing ten years ago and which appeared in the Provincial Newsletter of the Midwest (USA). They were not composed in any logical sequence, but sprung forth as the moment inspired. They are now presented in book form and, for that reason, have been classified in four thematic sections: characteristics of the life and personality of St. Vincent; his relationships with his contemporaries and friends; occasional pieces; and Vincentian elaborations on our missionary virtues.

Each article gathers and recomposes related passages which, however, were pronounced in different situations. In this way, St. Vincent might ask himself on more than one occasion: "Did I say that?" It is an attempt to draw from Vincentian "writings" some of the saint's principal themes and intuitions. The book is intended for anyone who wants to know the Vincentian vision of life, those doing works inspired by his spirit, and members of the Vincentian Family.

ERMINIO ANTONELLO, C.M.

*Una mistica della Carità. Suor Giuseppina Nicoli*

**Percorso Biografico-Spirituale**

Published by C.L.V. Edizioni Vincenziane, Rome, Italy, 1999  
(326 pages)

Seventy-five years after the death of the Servant of God, Sr. Giuseppina Nicoli, D.C. (1863-1924) the author traces the spiritual and biographical path which flows from the testimonies of those who lived with her and knew her, and especially from the 1473 letters written by Sr. Nicoli to superiors, acquaintances, and her sisters in community, simply allowing her to speak in her own words. In this way, the reader discovers the spiritual richness of a soul who lived the mystic of charity which drew its lifeblood from prayer of which she said: "As air is necessary to lungs, so is meditation necessary to our spirit."

Standing out at the same time, especially in the last 24 years of her life spent in Sardinia, is the figure of a "mature, motherly woman opened to charity, with two significant preferences: orphans and adolescents left to themselves."

Her life thus makes us understand the Vincentian mystic that is fulfilled in the complete gift to God in giving oneself to the poor. We hope that her holiness will be recognized officially by the Church.

JEAN GUITTON

*Dialoghi con Monsieur Pouget*

Published by Bompiani, Milan, Italy, 1999 (219 pages)

This is an Italian translation of the work, *Dialogues avec Monsieur Pouget*, published in French in 1954. The renowned author presents Fr. Pouget to us in the freshness of his dialogues, while treating the great problems of humanity and our faith: evil, the end of the world, the death of our species, the variety of worlds, the message of Christ. The book, although written a number of years ago, is appealing and agreeable reading when the philosophical discussion is united to the memory of the past and the theological discourse is mixed with pleasant anecdotes.

## COLLECTION

*Avivar la caridad, 2*

Published by CEME, Apartado 353, Salamanca, Spain, 1998  
(296 pages)

This is the second volume of the collection "Familia Vicenciana." It collects the conferences and reports of a Vincentian Family meeting (Salamanca, 1997). The conferences touch on various themes referring to Vincentian laity (its place in the Church, its spirituality) and throw light on the service of animation that the Vincentians and Daughters of Charity can give them. In addition, two titles are included: "The Laity and Monsieur Vincent" and "The Vincentian Family: A Global Vision." The reports, for their part, present aspects of spiritual and formative animation, government and finances, collaboration and service, and the presence of the Vincentian Family in various institutions.

JOSÉ LUIS CORTÁZAR, C.M.

*Manual del Voluntariado Vicenciano*

Published by Gráficas Don Bosco, Madrid, Spain, 1999 (175 pages)

This is a "Manual" intended principally for the members of the AIC. It will also be useful for their advisors, the Vincentian Fathers and the Daughters of Charity who work with them. It consists of a doctrinal part (the first six chapters) and a second practical part (the remaining 12 chapters). The first part presents the themes of charity, social action, the origin and current affairs of the Association, the charity organized according to St. Vincent, and the Vincentian Family. The second part, taking into account previous manuals, includes various councils, prayers, and formulas: Lauds and Vespers in honor of St. Vincent and St. Louise, rite for the imposition of the crucifix, formulas for the renovation of commitments, prayers appropriate for the volunteers, a Vincentian creed, etc. Finally, it offers an organized outline of the Association in Spain and indicates a basic bibliography. The "Manual" has been published in a small and manageable format so that each volunteer can read it and use it at home or at meetings.

AUGUSTÍN SLANINKA, C.M. - STELLA DANKOVÁ, D.C.

*Budete mi svedkami*

Published by Oto Németh, Bratislava, Slovakia, 1999 (247 pages)

The book, *Budete mi svedkami* — You will be my witnesses —, is dedicated to the confreres of the Slovak Vice-Province — in particular to the Vice-Visitor and Director of the Daughters of Charity, Fr. Jan Hutýra — who were persecuted, tried, tortured, imprisoned for several years, compelled to forced labor, etc. during the Communist regime. Some of them are still alive; others are already dead.

Written in Slovak by the present Visitor and a Daughter of Charity, the book has the character of a testimony based on the reports of the confreres themselves, “witnesses to the truth and to the love of Christ” and on the remembrances of persons who knew them, as well as some archival documents, principally, the minutes of the trials.



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